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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes a conference on the potential impact of sports on at-risk youngsters. More than 40 scholars and practitioners met to explore the role that sports programs play in promoting academic success, health and fitness, responsible social behaviors, and self-confidence, and ways that such programs could be expanded to reach those most in need. David A. Hamburg reported on the Carnegie Corporation's work in the area of youth development. James P. Comer discussed risk and opportunity in adolescence, the important role athletics can play in teaching personal discipline and perseverance, and the lack of training for persons working with young people. Robert L. John reviewed the developmental stages of early adolescence and the challenges health providers face in promoting young people's health. Reginald Clark explored the educational, social, and emotional needs of adolescents and how sports programs improve or hinder educational outcomes. Further discussion covered the Skillman Foundation Michigan report (1995), barriers to young people's participation in sport, and creating the structures among foundations, municipal governments, and federal agencies to continue to identify and address youth needs on an ongoing basis. Appendixes include the meeting agenda, a list of participants, and the background report "Role of Organized Sport in the Education and Health of American Children and Youth" from the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University (Martha E. Ewing, Vern D. Seefeldt, and Tempie P. Brown), which comprises the bulk of the document. (ND)

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Carnegie Meeting Papers

ED 407 376

THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

By Alex Poinsett

Report of a Meeting Convened
by Carnegie Corporation of New York
March 18, 1996

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From time to time Carnegie Corporation supports meetings on issues of importance that may or may not be closely related to its grant programs. Occasionally, reports of these meetings merit public dissemination.

Contents

Overview 1

Carnegie Corporation's Interest in Youth Development 2
David A. Hamburg 2

Risk and Opportunity in Adolescence 5
James P. Comer 5

Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents 6
Robert L. Johnson. 6
Reginald Clark 7
Martha E. Ewing and Vern D. Seefeldt 8

Discussion of the Michigan Study 11

Barriers to Participation 14

Lighting Fires: Options for Action 16

Toward a Research Agenda 19

Creating the Structures 23

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Appendix B: List of Meeting Participants

Appendix C: Background Report
Role of Organized Sport in the Education and Health of American Children and Youth, by Martha E. Ewing, Vern D. Seefeldt, and Tempie P. Brown (Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University, 1996)

THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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OVERVIEW

Throughout much of his adult life, tennis superstar Arthur Ashe helped raise public awareness of the multiple ways that young people's participation in sports promotes their healthy development. Convinced that lessons learned on playing fields, on courts, and in swimming pools are transferable to educational settings and the everyday world, Ashe saw that sports could turn around many at-risk youngsters and point them in positive directions. He cofounded the National Junior Tennis League to involve such youths in tennis. Before his untimely death in February 1993, he persuaded Carnegie Corporation of New York to convene a daylong conference in New York, highlighting sports in the broader context of youth development.

The conference was held on March 18, 1996. Carnegie Corporation's president David A. Hamburg noted that this was really "Ashe's meeting." Though he was physically absent, his ideas and personality provided "authentic and lasting inspiration" to the foundation and the participants. Were he alive, Hamburg said, Ashe would be presiding today.

The conference drew more than forty scholars and practitioners from across the nation to explore the role that sports programs play in promoting academic success, health and fitness, responsible social behaviors, and self-confidence among young people and ways that such

programs could be expanded to reach those most in need. Chaired by James P. Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at Yale University, it featured five presenters: Hamburg; Robert L. Johnson, M.D., director of adolescent medicine, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Newark; Reginald Clark, consultant; Martha E. Ewing, associate professor, of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University; and Vern D. Seefeldt, professor and director emeritus, also of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports. Ewing and Seefeldt were coauthors with Tempie P. Brown of a literature review and analysis, commissioned by the Corporation as background for the meeting, of the beneficial (or detrimental) effects of organized youth sports (see Appendix C).

Carnegie Corporation's Interest in Youth Development

David A. Hamburg

During the past twenty-five years, Carnegie Corporation has devoted considerable time and resources to a better understanding of child and adolescent development. The foundation has sought to identify ways in which the major institutions of society can ensure positive outcomes for youth despite drastic changes in the state of American families. By awarding grants and sponsoring special study groups on the issues, the Corporation has not only expanded basic knowledge about the developmental needs of children and youth but also proposed practical strategies for improving their life chances.

Two crucially formative and relatively neglected phases in the life span have been at the center of the Corporation's interests: the first three years of life, beginning with the prenatal period; and early adolescence, covering ages ten through fourteen. "These periods powerfully shape the rest of the life course," Hamburg noted. "There are a lot of moving parts in both phases that have to come together in more or less the right way for individuals to have decent chances of growing up intact."

Research and practice on the effects of supportive programs for children and youth are

synthesized in several widely distributed Corporation-sponsored reports: *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century (1989)*; *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent (1990)*; *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours (1992)*; *Fateful Choices: Healthy Youth for the 21st Century (1992)*; *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children (1994)*; *Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century (1995)*; and the forthcoming *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children (1996)*. Five of these are products of the Carnegie Council of Adolescent Development, established in 1986 to direct public attention to the sometimes grim challenges of adolescence.

Turning Points reported that substantial numbers of American adolescents facing adulthood are inadequately prepared to meet the requirements of the workplace, the commitments of relationships in families and with friends, and the responsibilities of full participation in a democratic society. These young people are among an estimated seven million — one in four adolescents — who are extremely vulnerable to multiple high-risk behaviors and school failure. Another seven million may be at moderate risk and are cause for serious concern. Altogether, as many as one-half of American adolescents are at moderate to high risk of impairing their life chances through engagement in behaviors and activities that are destructive to themselves and others.

Great Transitions, the Carnegie Council's concluding report, tried to answer such questions as: What does it take to become a healthy, problem-solving, constructive adult? What kind of experiences during adolescence are "enormously helpful" to the process of getting from childhood to adulthood? The report outlined some of the essential requirements for setting young adolescents on the pathway to effective adulthood. Ideally, all adolescents must

- Find a valued place in a constructive group.
- Learn how to form close, durable human relationships.
- Feel a sense of worth as a person.
- Achieve a reliable basis for making informed, deliberate decisions — especially on matters that have large consequences, such as educational futures.
- Know how to use available support systems.

- Find ways of being useful to others beyond the self.
- Believe in a promising future with real opportunities.
- Cultivate the inquiring and problem-solving habits of mind for lifelong learning and adaptability.
- Learn respect for democratic values and understand responsible citizenship.
- Build a healthy lifestyle.

This listing, in essence, sums up the meaning of youth development. No single institution, however — not even the family by itself — can produce it. That task requires the concerted efforts of all the frontline institutions — not only families, but schools, health care providers, the media, and community organizations, particularly sports and sports organizations — that influence youths and the choices they make almost daily.

Is it possible to move the balance of these institutional influences from worse to better? The Carnegie Council, rather than presenting a utopian or hypothetical ideal of what might be done some day, has offered practical models of programs and interventions that can be observed in some communities and that are known to work or show promise for young people. But these struggling models are scattered much too thinly around America. What is needed is an ambitious scaling up to a nationwide network of robust, self-functioning organizations and institutions meeting a range of child and adolescent needs.

Currently, anywhere from 17,000 to 20,000 national and local youth-serving organizations, including those sponsored by religious groups, operate in the United States, but they do not adequately provide opportunities for about one-third of young people — especially those at risk who stand to benefit the most from the support and guidance these organizations can give. With sports acting as a powerful attractant, youth organizations must be helped to expand their reach in all communities, conveying information about life chances, careers, and places beyond the neighborhood and engaging young people in community and other constructive pursuits that foster education and health.

Risk and Opportunity in Adolescence

James P. Comer

Declaring that "the social sciences generally pay too little attention to young adolescents, even though this is a very critical period in development," conference chair James P. Comer said that the image of today's typical adolescent is vastly different from yesterday's. Arthur Ashe's fifth-grade teacher remembered him as a "quiet, humble, well-mannered" child who said "please" and "thank you" and always did his homework. Many youngsters of fourteen or younger today experiment with alcohol, drugs, and sex. More girls are acquiring sexually transmitted diseases or becoming pregnant and giving birth to low-birthweight babies. More young adolescents are becoming alienated from school, even becoming involved with deadly weapons.

A major problem for young people at risk is that they have not had the kind of experiences, involving personal discipline and the ability to persevere, that success in life demands. Athletics can be a useful vehicle for teaching life's rules. Nevertheless, during economic setbacks, schools and communities tend to cut athletics first. That, said Comer, is a mistake that grossly ignores the value of athletics in youth development.

Comer reported that adolescents have much more discretionary time and far less supervision today than they did forty years ago, largely because the community that once nurtured them "is no more." With greater mobility and autonomy than previously, they can be in many places and be doing many things beyond meaningful adult scrutiny.

In his boyhood in Indiana, Comer played basketball under street lights. "I knew that sports were very important, even though I also knew when I was six that I wanted to be a doctor. So I worked hard in school. But nothing was like that moment on the basketball court when you drove to the hoop. There was nothing like that in anything else I ever did. So I know the value — the importance — of athletics."

Oddly, in a nation obsessed with watching sports, not enough attention is paid to participation in sports. Also in athletics, as in all other youth-serving areas, too little attention is given to the training of persons working with young people and to the selection of coaches. Comer became very aware of that problem when his son, now thirty-five, played basketball at a high school where parents traditionally feted the team. During a dinner after a game that the team should have won, their coach, who usually attended, was absent. "He sat on the bench still moaning and groaning about the loss," Comer recalled. "The kids were there alone. What a wonderful time to help them and support them in handling their feelings of loss. Losing is something we do all of our lives. Learning how to lose as well as how to win is tremendously important. Coaches can play a very important role in handling not only that emotion but all emotions that young people have."

As many as 90 percent of the nation's 2.5 million volunteer coaches, however, lack formal preparation, according to the study by Ewing, Seefeldt, and Brown. They suggest that, even in the best of circumstances, educating the million or more coaches needed annually would be a formidable task, mainly because no certification or accreditation agency exists and because not enough education programs for coaches are available.

Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

Robert L. Johnson

Addressing the health needs of adolescents, Robert L. Johnson reviewed the developmental stage of early adolescence. It is a period, he stressed, when children begin learning how to become adults, when they are increasingly emancipated from the direct control of their parents, and when they establish a separate intellectual, sexual, and functional identity and undergo further cognitive development.

Most young people obtain the information they need through observation of others. The lessons they learn reflect the quality of those observations, which hinge not only on the

time they spend with family members and other adults, particularly in sports activities, but also in school with their peer group or in contact with the mass media.

Health providers are challenged to promote young people's health, but they have no reliable markers of that status, Johnson averred. Standard indicators of adolescent health are levels of mortality and morbidity. Currently the leading cause of mortality among adolescents is accidents, followed by homicides. Among inner-city male adolescents, homicides rank first and suicides third. Mortality, however, is not the major health issue for adolescents; morbidity is. Most serious illnesses and disabilities among adolescents are caused by accidents — which also rank first in health-dollar consumption — followed by assaults, especially in urban areas.

The third leading cause of teenage morbidity is pregnancy. Indeed, most hospitalizations among adolescents are pregnancy related, although this figure is changing because of a slight decrease in the number of adolescents who are becoming pregnant and because of a decline in the number of hospital days spent by pregnant women.

Sexually transmitted diseases are another major reason adolescents come into contact with health providers. It is at this time that health personnel have a great opportunity to evaluate adolescents' total health status and to detect other problems such as substance abuse, nutritional deficits, and lack of exercise, all of which influence morbidity.

Reginald Clark

Reginald Clark explored the educational, social, and emotional needs of adolescents and how sports programs improve or hinder educational outcomes. Schools are the most common arena for the involvement of youth in sports, he said, with informal or free-play sports among peers the second most common and organized sports programs the least common of all.

While his presentation focused mainly on the constructive influence of sports involvement, Clark recalled a cruel side. "I grew up in a Chicago inner-city community. We

went to the park in the summertime to swim. There was a lifeguard. I'll never forget, this guy's name was 'Lucky.' I had violated the rules by having one of these inflatable things under my trunks. I was determined to dive off of the high board, and I didn't want to drown. When I jumped in, my trunks came down and he saw the inflatable thing. He said: 'Come here! Get up on that high board and jump off ten times.' I'd never done this before. I guess he called that giving me an incentive, but to this day I'd better not see him. That certainly didn't motivate me."

Martha E. Ewing and Vern D. Seefeldt

Ewing and Seefeldt identified organized sports as any activity supervised by an adult where scheduled practices and games are part of the whole process. In their literature review, youth sports are divided into 1) agency-sponsored, 2) national youth-service, 3) club sports, 4) recreational, 5) school-sponsored intramural, and 6) interscholastic programs.

The researchers estimated that 22 million children and youth, ages six to eighteen, are involved in agency-sponsored sports (see Table 1). By far the largest number are in nonschool programs. However, because some children participated in more than one sport and were counted more than once, the study overestimated the number of youth-sport participants.

Table 2 charts gender participation in Interscholastic Athletics during the 1995-96 school year. Generally, Ewing et al. report that participation in nonschool sports among both boys and girls has increased during the last two decades. The participation of boys in interscholastic programs decreased in the 1980s but increased again in 1990. Organized sports opportunities for girls have increased since passage of Title IX (of the Federal Education Amendments of 1972), which provided that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Nevertheless, fewer girls than boys participate in sports. They start at older ages and drop out at higher rates. The fact that nine out of ten youth sport coaches are males may be a subtle but formidable barrier to the entry and continued participation of girls in organized sports.

Table 1. Estimated Percent of Youth Enrolled in Specific Categories of Youth Sports.*

Category of Activity	Percent of All Eligible Enrollees[a]	Approximate N of Participants
Agency-Sponsored Sports (i.e., Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football)	45	22,000,000
Club Sports (i.e., Pay for Services, Gymnastics, Ice Skating, Swimming)	5	2,368,700
Recreational Sports Programs (Everyone Plays—Sponsored by Recreational Departments)	30	14,512,200
Intramural Sports (Middle, Junior, Senior High Schools)	10	451,000
Interscholastic Sports (Middle, Junior, Senior High Schools)	12[b] 40[c]	1,741,200 5,776,820

* Total population of eligible participants in the 5-17 year age category (in 1995) was estimated to be 48,374,000 by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1989.

[a] Totals do not equal 100 percent because of multiple-category participation by some athletes.

[b] Percent of total population aged 5-17 years.

[c] Percent of total high school-aged population (N = 14,510,000).

Table 2. Participation by Boys and Girls in Interscholastic Athletics During the 1995-96 School Year.

	Boys		Girls	
	Number of Schools	Number of Participants	Number of Schools	Number of Participants
Archery	16	107	5	10
Badminton	*197	3,313	*364	8,058
Baseball	14,174	444,476	75	**1,340
Basketball	16,574	545,596	16,198	445,869
Bowling	709	8,100	715	7,322
Canoeing	9	191	12	271
Comp. Spirit Squad	*246	**521	1,913	32,758
Crew	42	1,037	36	966
Cross country	11,360	168,203	10,774	140,187
Decathlon	36	128	4	12
Equestrian	23	78	33	344
Fencing	38	692	34	527
Field hockey			1,460	56,142
Football				
11-man	13,004	957,573	79	**791
9-man	223	6,179		
8-man	599	13,369	2	**15
6-man	138	4,359	2	**13
Golf	11,394	140,011	5,469	**39,634
Gymnastics	177	2,635	*1,522	19,398
Heptathlon			16	63
Ice hockey	*985	**24,281	165	**1,471
Judo	10	142	5	23
Lacrosse	539	24,114	375	14,704
Pentathlon	1	15	2	4
Riflery	194	1,882	125	622
Skiing				
(Cross Country)	361	4,153	354	4,036
(Alpine)	365	5,809	347	4,509
Soccer	*8,182	**283,728	6,526	209,287
Softball				
(Fast Pitch)	83	1,932	11,452	305,217
(Slow Pitch)	8	161	1,523	34,195
Swimming & diving	*4,852	**81,000	4,948	**111,360
Team tennis	381		381	
Tennis	9,214	136,534	9,165	146,573
Track & field				
(Indoor)	1,861	41,950	1,770	37,385
(Outdoor)	14,505	454,645	14,410	379,060
Volleyball	1,381	**31,553	12,669	357,576
Water polo	430	10,238	173	**4,564
Weight lifting	449	13,615	112	2,169
Wrestling	8,677	221,162	225	1,164
Other	67	404	63	168

* Includes some co-educational teams

** Includes girls playing on boys' teams and boys playing on girls' teams

Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations, based on competition at the High School Level in the 1995-96 school year.

Evidence shows that the involvement of young people in sports produces multiple benefits for them. At their best, sports programs promote responsible social behaviors and greater academic success, confidence in one's physical abilities, an appreciation of personal health and fitness, and strong social bonds with individuals and institutions. Teachers attribute these results to the discipline and work ethic that sports require.

Regarding the benefits of sports participation for youth development, Ewing stressed that children are not miniature adults. Though able to mimic adult skills, they do not readily understand many sports concepts, such as fair play. "'If I'm doing it, it's fair,'" she quoted young people's thinking. "'If I have to take a turn and let somebody else do it, that's not fair.' That's the level of their understanding." She said that sports can provide a venue for helping young people work toward ethical understanding.

Similarly, very young people are not good at relating their behavior of an hour earlier to locker room comments by coaches at halftime. "They should receive the correction or instruction at the time an incident occurs," Ewing insisted. Sports programs, moreover, can create positive learning environments so that children grow to understand that benefits can be derived from losing, as Comer pointed out. "They're going to lose a lot in life," said Ewing. "It's what we do following that loss that is critical to continued success." She added, "Kids also need to understand that trying is the important piece. The outcome will take care of itself." Children generally misunderstand the relation between effort and ability until they are about age twelve. To them, not playing well is an indication of mediocre ability; they don't automatically realize that greater effort might yield better results."

Can good leaders be developed from participation in sports? "They can if we teach for leadership," Ewing responded. "That means you have to give kids a chance to take responsibility, make some decisions, and be more integrally involved in what happens in their sport program, rather than simply telling them and constantly making all decisions and at times absolving them from taking responsibility."

While sports can stimulate good study habits and the expression of ethical behaviors such as fair play, sportsmanship, integrity, and compassion, if these values are not modeled by parents and coaches, the results can be counterproductive. Children are very eager to please adults, which makes them vulnerable to adult manipulation and coercion. For example, overzealous parents who include tennis in their budget for a child may be conveying the message: "You'd better do it because this is a major investment." Or, when a parent tells a son, "You aren't trying hard enough, get off the court," the veiled message may be that the parent cares more about the boy as an athlete than as a person.

"In gymnastics training, there are instances where, if young athletes don't get the routines right on the first pass, they'll have to do five more. One child, at the end of her practice, owed the coach sixty-five more repetitions. I think that's abuse," said Ewing.

"We have to develop a different perception of competence in sports," she continued. "Not all kids are equal in ability. They develop competence at different rates. Most of our sports programs are age bound, so that if you're this old you're in this sports program. It doesn't matter that you haven't had the same experience as someone else prior to coming into the program. Or you may already know that stuff and want to go on to something else that's more interesting. We have to match the challenges of sports to children's abilities."

Several studies have shown that when coaches use a positive approach — more frequent encouragement, positive reinforcement, and corrective feedback — their players will have significantly higher self-esteem ratings over the course of a season than players whose coaches shun these techniques.

If youngsters are to participate in sports, Ewing suggested, they should have an environment safe from gangs, and they should be protected from injuries, both physical and mental, resulting from inappropriate equipment and from abusive and unqualified coaches. She also called for more women and minority administrators and coaches in sports.

DISCUSSION OF THE MICHIGAN STUDY

Agreeing that participation in sports is a potential vehicle for healthy adolescent development, Sylvia Yee, vice president of programs at the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund in San Francisco, wondered, "How good is the evidence of the benefits of sports? What outcomes can sports participation help produce? What can we confidently promise in terms of outcomes? Frankly, I don't think that sports can be seen as a simple solution for the myriad of challenges that inner-city youth face growing up. But it can be seen as an important way that communities and families can support the development of its young people."

As to the study's treatment of interscholastic, intramural, and community-based sports, Yee argued that the issues and opportunities among these kinds of programs vary considerably. "Schools can have paid coaches and have much more control over training and safety requirements than after-school sports programs, which rely predominantly on volunteers. Coach training for volunteers is a key issue for community-based sports. Does the Michigan study help us understand this important piece?"

Larry Hawkins, president of the Institute for Athletics and Education, University of Chicago, observed that the professionalism of adult leaders distinguishes recreation from sport. "It's long-term commitment and experience that makes the difference," he said. "We can't talk about volunteers because people volunteer when they don't have something else to do. Pros come to work, rain or shine."

"The Haas, Jr. Fund," said Yee, "did a survey, which estimated that about a quarter of the young people in San Francisco and Oakland play some kind of after-school or summer sports. Less than a fourth of the players are girls. And few coaches are women. A wide spectrum of groups offered after school sports, including the Parks and Recreation Departments, Police Athletic Leagues, and many voluntary organizations. The Catholic Youth Organization is the major multi-sport provider on both sides of the Bay, and they do relatively

well getting girls to participate because the parish schools encourage all students to play." Yee said further, "In the Bay area the demographics are changing rapidly, and it's not just an issue of black and white. We have significant proportions of Asian and Latino youth. So how can we engage different communities of color? What are the culturally appropriate forms of organized sports? What will attract kids? How might we involve their parents?"

Hawkins brought up the need for the television industry to distinguish between the values of amateur and commercial sports. "What we teach on TV is the business part of it, and that's what the students see and we don't distinguish. To the degree that the major colleges are part of the business, they don't make the distinction, either. We cannot continue to have our youth programs dictated to us by the business sector." Hawkins would keep elementary schools open past 3 p.m. and have them cooperate with youth sport agencies like the YMCA, local clubs, and churches in the provision of after-school sports programs.

Marc Freedman, vice president of Public/Private Ventures in Berkeley, California, believes youth sports could offer a broader opportunity for developing the civic infrastructure of neighborhoods and helping adolescents to interact. "It's a way of really building neighborhoods and bringing together people not directly involved in the coaching or the playing of sports. In many ways adults are just as interested in youth sports as kids."

The Michigan study declared that sports should be a positive and rewarding experience for children and adolescents. "But that experience depends on the quality of the sports program and the coach who directly interacts with the athletes," said Michelle Glassman, executive director of the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation. "Sports injuries have reached epidemic proportions. Between 3 and 5 million children are seen in hospital emergency rooms yearly because of these injuries. Most of the injuries are preventable. Too many are a direct result of pressure on children from parents and coaches to win."

A conferee objected that dance, aerobics, and other activities to promote self-expression were not included in the study. "It was very biased toward formal programs," she said. "There

was no mention of double Dutch or stickball, for instance, but they're terribly important."

The Michigan study does not deal with why the nation has the world's most unfit children, said Johnson. "From what we know, it's a combination of very poor nutrition — the amount of calories that come from fat and the absence of some very important nutrients like iron — and the fact that our children are sedentary. Many children, I personally believe, are involved in the wrong sports activities. Organized sports like basketball and football don't really have a marked health benefit to a young person as much as track and field, for example."

According to Johnson, organized sports give health providers an opportunity, primarily through coaches, to promote the diet necessary for active participation in a sport and the development of aerobic activities within a sport — two important means for ensuring long-term health. He suggested further that the Michigan study be expanded to encompass what health providers can contribute to youth development. "Every child participating in an organized sport has to have a screening physical examination. That gives health providers an opportunity to determine not only whether they can breathe and see adequately but the status of other important biomedical and psychosocial markers, like the family structure."

Conferees generally agreed that sports have a high potential for contributing to the development of the nation's young people. Some were concerned about the apparently greater value placed on sports than on recreation in the Michigan study, however. Michael Pratt, physical activity branch chief of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, said, "We think that kids who are active through adulthood are healthier. From our standpoint, it isn't terribly important whether they're active in a sport or a recreation program."

"We're talking about sports as an intervention," Johnson responded. "Each category mentioned in the study is quite different. When we talk about which one is best and which one should be funded, we have to be careful to describe exactly what we mean. There are

different benefits from participation in organized gymnastics as opposed to gymnastics on an old mattress in the middle of a field."

"If you want to develop an intervention program for children," Johnson suggested, "there's no better place than the school, since just about all kids are there, at least up to the fourth grade." Other meeting participants agreed that, while sports may not be for everyone, participation in sports would be enhanced if physical education were put back into the school system for all children.

Barriers to Participation in Sports

Barriers to the broader participation of young people in sports abound. They include not enough sport facilities; lack of exposure to the widest range of sports; programs that intimidate children who lack the right athletic skills; lack of transportation; the location of sports facilities in gang-infested, unsafe parts of town; and cultural attitudes and conflicts between children of different cultures and religions. For example, it may be nearly impossible for a Hispanic girl to participate in sports if her culture dictates that she come home, help prepare dinner, and take care of her siblings.

To the question of why some youngsters do not play, Ewing said that many do not feel they are skilled enough. "It's not fun if you don't know what you're doing," agreed Larry Hawkins. "How you can induce young people to get into a sport is a question that is being addressed by a Chicago group, Youth Initiative." Funded by the Chicago Community Trust, Youth Initiative offers substantial training for coaches and young people.

According to Fred Engh, president and chief executive officer of the National Alliance for Youth Sports, many youngsters are being chased away from participation in sports. Researchers with his organization tested 1,100 children, ages six to eight, in Cincinnati on basic sports skills such as catching, throwing, and striking a ball. They found that 49 percent of the

children did not meet minimum requirements to participate in organized sports programs. Hawkins observed that "bungling by many state legislatures in physical education programs has resulted in fifth and sixth graders unable to hop, skip, and jump."

Estimating that about 78 percent of children leave sports programs prematurely, Engh said the reason is that "we create programs that are run by volunteers who have no training and no relevant education. Why are we talking about the values of sports when we chase them out at that rate?"

A critic of Engh's findings pointed out that there are more than seventy different sports in which boys and girls participate. "If a child can't hit with a baseball bat," she said, "maybe he can play Ping Pong or horseshoes. We have to broaden our minds regarding what recreational sport is."

One of the biggest barriers to youth participation in sports is the experts' own tendency to talk and not act, said one meeting participant. "We tend to sit down at the table quite a bit," agreed L. B. Scott, president of the National Association of Police Leagues, "but we don't come up with anything that can make things happen for kids."

Yee recalled that when Bay Area providers were asked what the barriers were to expanding after-school youth sport, they said that they had difficulty securing enough volunteers. Also, access to playing fields and facilities and the maintenance of these facilities were big issues. Although the membership fees were usually modest, many young people needed scholarships to participate.

"A big challenge is finding enough people to volunteer as coaches. We also need a training process, because too many coaches receive no coaching. We especially need to train more women as coaches if we want to get more girls involved."

Conferees agreed that better-qualified coaches are needed to provide safe, effective youth

sport programs. But, Freedman reported, even if volunteers are supervised by trained persons, a decrease of six million volunteers since 1989 limits expansion of that workforce. A way out, he suggested, is the use of more young people to plan activities — for example, high school students organizing elementary school sports events.

Participants considered the implications for all youth of a sports infrastructure that allows only about 5 million youngsters to participate. That total does not include enough women, or youngsters with disabilities, and it reflects only a narrow range of sports activities. Yet expanding that infrastructure to accommodate the nation's 50 million kids would require massive expenditures with no guarantee that they would participate, said Johnson.

Stringent eligibility requirements are another barrier. One by-product of minimum no-pass, no-play kinds of regulations, for example, is that in major urban areas, as much as 50 percent of youths are ineligible for participation. A conferee argued: "Given differences in developmental stages — the light comes on in different areas for different kids at different times — if we think of sports as a hook for keeping kids in school until the light comes on even in the classroom, then these barriers may be serving counterproductive purposes."

Lighting Fires: Options for Action

Lamenting a lack of coordination among sports groups, Randy McNeil, executive director of the Youth Sports and Recreation Commission, pressed for strategies that pull their programs together. He suggested that the role of sports and recreation in youth development is not highly valued in some quarters where crucial financial decisions are made. He urged meeting participants to place more emphasis on advocacy to influence federal, state, and local policymakers.

Major league baseball provides an incentive, declared Kathleen Francis, director of marketing development of Major League Baseball Charities: "If we can get kids on the field

playing the game, we can also teach them something while they're there, and they won't even realize it. That's what we can do, and we can assist with the funding. While we have the kids, help us teach some more. While we have the coaches, help us teach them. I'd love to see us collaborate on what we do best to support youth."

Stedman Graham, founder and executive director of the Chicago-based Athletes Against Drugs, noted that municipalities, youth organizations, foundations, corporations, the media, civic not-for-profit organizations, sporting equipment manufacturers, professional sports teams, individual professional athletes, and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Health — which is committed to eliminating drug use among young people — are all advocates for getting more kids into sports. But these groups need leaders. Graham estimated that the assembled conferees themselves represented a combined constituency of more than 5 million children active in youth sports programs. "That's 5 million that we probably control or have access to. How do we affect those lives and then leverage the resources to get 5 million other kids?

"What we should do is to provide the intent and the vision of what we want to do and can do, then organize our marketplace," advised Graham. He proposed that, together, meeting participants mold themselves into the leadership group of a national coalition. This coalition, in turn, would have the mission of mobilizing youth to participate in sports and advocating for increased sports program budgets. It would prod citizens into becoming volunteers in youth sports programs, prod municipalities into getting money for sports back into the schools, prod principals and school councils into launching after-school sports programs, prod the National Collegiate Athletic Association into investing money in grassroots sports organizations, and prod the President of the United States into talking about sports and youth development to reduce crime and gang problems. "Those are the things that collectively we have the power to do," Graham asserted. "Later, a White House initiative could be developed through the President's Council."

"All of us agree that there should be a comprehensive, coordinated, collaborative,

integrated effort," a conferee added. "But it doesn't take us very far in figuring out what to do, what kinds of components to bring together, how to build a program." Peter Westbrook, executive director of the Peter Westbrook Foundation in New York, offered another perspective. "I'm looking for a more micro approach. When we deal with our youth we have to have ethnic coaches or people that they can actually relate to."

"You have to *decide* to do it," Johnson urged. "Once you decide that, then you can work those things out." In 1972 Johnson cofounded The Door, an organization that provides New York's youth with services ranging from legal to social to psychiatric counseling. The Door has a canteen where adolescents can work; a cafeteria; medical, educational, and vocational training centers; and a creative workshop offering a range of activities including weight lifting, basketball, ballet, woodworking, calligraphy, jewelry making, and gymnastics. In short, The Door's developmental programs enable adolescents to learn a variety of skills and how to be physically competent and confident.

Johnson repeated earlier calls for comprehensive approaches, reminding conferees that teenagers are not monolithic, that they require more than recreation and more than sports activity; rather, they require a cafeteria of offerings. "Sports works best as part of a comprehensive menu of activities."

On the need to train and recruit volunteers, McNeil remarked that "the bottom-up concept is a really important part of this. You can sit around the table and talk about all of the great things that we want to see happen, but if the community doesn't buy into it, then these programs cannot be sustained. If the community takes it on, it will find a way to make sure that it happens."

McNeil cited the 1992 Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development report, *A Matter of Time*, which explored the extent to which young people's free time is being spent productively or in problem activities. The report concluded that about 75 percent of young people's time in the nonschool hours is discretionary. It said that sports is one activity in

which agencies can pursue their interest in youth development. "We're not looking to develop athletes for competition," said McNeil. "We're saying that sports in and of itself is a developmental tool and one of the essential components in the system of care."

The Carnegie Council's report identified more than 500 existing youth-serving programs that it said support healthy development in early adolescence. "There is not a need to create new agencies but to take advantage of existing agencies and, where needed, reinforce them," McNeil argued, adding, "Young people do not avail themselves of available opportunities because they lack transportation, funds, and a sense of safety."

Summarizing the discussion, Comer stressed that "something" needs to be created that does not now exist at the local level — "something that coordinates, investigates, promotes, and lights fires." Since little can be accomplished by lecturing people, the question is, "How do we light a fire?" To Comer, the spark is any evidence that a proposed strategy pays off. "That kind of fire could galvanize politicians, policymakers, and decision makers, persuading them to institute youth-serving policies."

Tim Richardson, director of program services at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, said that the clubs serve 2.4 million disadvantaged young people. Roughly 1 million are involved in sports. Coming initially for the sports, they continue in other club programs. "The overall program is based on something beyond sports," Richardson explained. "The primary focus of our youth development strategy is to build a sense of belonging, usefulness, influence, and competence in every kid who walks into our building. By doing those things, we find that they tend to come back, be it through sports or the fine arts program."

Toward a Research Agenda

Sports are competing with other activities for limited resources," warned sociologist Jomills Braddock, II, professor in the sociology department, University of Miami. "We need a solid

research base to support arguments that are being advanced here. That's a complicated issue, not just because the dollars to support it aren't bountiful but because researchers don't define this as a topic of sufficient interest. One of the things that this conference and the foundations gathered here can do is generate a momentum to build a research agenda in support of these issues. Without that, we won't have the ammunition to win the battles in the larger macro context."

Agreeing on the need for research to address the effects of youth participation in sports, one conferee suggested it would lend some legitimacy to the word "sports," because in general foundations have not supported sports programs, dismissing them as tantamount to play.

Clark proposed a set of research questions that have not been adequately dealt with:

1) What are the average rates of youth participation in various categories of organized sports (including programs that are agency sponsored, are in recreational clubs, or are intramural), and how do these rates vary across population groups (economic levels, ages, gender, races, school achievement levels, regions of the country, and neighborhoods)?

2) To what extent does time spent in organized sports contribute to adolescents' academic achievement?

3) How much effect do organized sports programs have on educational success in comparison to other activities, such as informal sports and free play, church activities, and organized lessons? What is an ideal level or balance of participation in organized sports if, for example, academic success is a primary goal?

4) How do skills learned from sports activities transfer to adolescents' school learning and literacy development?

5) What skills do qualified coaches possess? What training models work well in developing these qualified coaches or mentors?

6) How do parents effectively support their children's participation in organized sports?

Other questions for future research on youth sports were posed by Michael Pratt:

1) If we change community infrastructure, will we see an increase in participation in sports or physical activity? "It seems logical that we will," Pratt says, "but there really

is not good science to show that if you put in new swimming pools and tracks and open up gyms more kids will be active. It may be just the same kids who are already active in a crummy facility."

2) Are sports participation and academic performance associated? "There is a little bit of research in that area," says Pratt, "but it is not convincing enough for you to take it to policymakers and say, if you eliminate the physical education program you are going to see a drop in academic standards."

3) Can sports be used as an intervention for general health promotion and/or crime prevention? Can sports be used as a hook to reap other benefits? "There is anecdotal evidence," said Pratt, "but not such overwhelming scientific evidence that we would want to form a consensus on that subject."

4) Can we design approaches that will increase participation in sports and physical activity among adolescent girls, particularly African American girls? And can we develop programs that will not just get these kids started in physical activity but allow them to remain in that activity until adulthood?"

5) Can counseling and health care providers actually increase participation in sports and physical activity among kids?

Of those young women who become pregnant, few participate in sports, noted Richardson. This does not, however, demonstrate that girls who participate in sports are less likely to become pregnant. "When you go to Congress and say, put money into this, you really have to demonstrate these causal relationships. From what I've seen, not much has been done for this whole category of young people. There's a crying need for research establishing causality."

One reason why there may be less pregnancy among young women who participate in sports is because they do not have much downtime, suggested former Olympic star Willye White. "We can do research all day," she declared. "But we have a problem. We have children out there with too much downtime. Most of the crime occurs between the hours of 3 and 7 p.m. Why? Downtime! Let's figure out ways that we can deal with the downtime."

Rush L. Russell, program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, wondered why there has not been better research on the relationship between sports and adolescent

development and better evaluation at some level of the effectiveness of sports involvement to deal, for example, with the downtime issue. "It seems to me that if it works, there should be some level of evidence out there," he said. "I also want to de-emphasize the need for pure, scientific, randomly controlled trials (RCTs) for the level of evidence. Congress does not move based on RCTs. It moves largely based on anecdotal evidence. If you can present a very powerful story — enough associational evidence to convince a congressman that this needs to happen — those investments have a return."

"We have not had the will or the collective intelligence to evaluate programs," Johnson claimed. "We move based upon our gut feelings. There's very little budget for evaluation in most of these programs."

The Women's Sports Foundation conducts research, reported its president, Wendy Hilliard, so that when staffers go to Washington they can inform members of Congress that, for example, under Title IX, women receive $179 million less than men.

Scott conceded a need for research on youth sports but decried the number of years that often elapse before useful answers to urgent problems surface. "That's not going to solve our problem." He also said Detroit and other cities have developed children's commissions to coordinate activities among youth-serving agencies. "That works quite well, because it gives you more bang for your buck. You're not getting duplication of services."

Joy Dryfoos, an independent researcher, noted that existing data sets — such as the U.S. Department of Education's National Longitudinal Study and the Use Risk Behavior Series published annually by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — can be used for analysis, thus saving millions of research dollars. A longitudinal study of eighth graders begun in 1988 has been followed up every two years — most recently in 1994 — while subjects were either in the labor force or in college. The survey gathered rich information about the participation of youth in intramural and interscholastic sports.

One conferee wanted to know, "How might we use what knowledge we already have to give great access to sports by young people? How might we look at how things are connected — how athletic activities are connected to schools? What do we know for sure? What needs to be known, and how can we collect that information in a way that is convincing?"

In summary, said Comer, new research is needed, but more can be done to tap existing material and synthesize what is known. That research can be useful, he said, in helping convince policymakers that they need to invest in sports, particularly with respect to adolescent development. "All of these problems that we call teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and crime and violence are failures of development. But the greatest failure is the failure of the society to invest in development in the first place. Who is in charge of the development of young people? Nobody! And so, investment in youth has been haphazard — a little here and there — and there is very little going on at the community level. We've got to think about how to do research in a way that helps us both serve youth better and convince policymakers that they need to invest in youth development — not only for young people's sake but for society's sake."

CREATING THE STRUCTURES

"What are the structures that we need?" Comer asked. "How can foundations, municipal governments, and federal agencies create structures that will keep the issue alive, that will keep us identifying youth needs on an ongoing basis, that can generate research that will allow us to influence policymakers and oversee and sustain the effort?"

Keith Cruickshank, director of grants and programs of the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) of Los Angeles, reported that the AAF had convened a meeting entitled "The Funding Crisis in High School Athletics: Causes and Solutions." Among other projects, the AAF decided to launch a public relations campaign, informing citizens about the importance

of athletics in the overall educational process and the current perilous position of interscholastic sports. "We talked about breaking down some of the barriers of 'us' versus 'them,'" Cruickshank recalled. "We need an advocate for sports to formulate strategic plans and recognize that there are other forms of outside funding that can help. We're looking at the Dodgers to help us organize, for example, a program that's going to benefit sports and kids in Los Angeles."

Johnson envisioned a structure that would not only set a research agenda but develop policy frameworks and programs based on that research. In short, it would put youth development on the national agenda. "In the past," he said, "major foundations have come together with major governmental entities and formed a task force or study group that has had a life over a number of years and sufficient funding." Something of the kind is needed for this issue, he said.

It was pointed out that authority and responsibility is placed squarely on the United States Olympic Committee to organize these kinds of efforts. "We need to think realistically," suggested Angela Duran of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Categorical funding for something like sports is not going to be popular in Washington these days. The power of deciding where money goes is going to move down to the state level." Agreeing, Michelle Seligson, director of the School-Age Child Care Project, Wellesley College, said, "The problem is that too many groups and issues will have critical claims on the money and the priorities." She stressed the need for collaboration and coalition building. Johnson countered that federal funding would be available to finance research if sports were tied into "hot issues" like violence prevention and substance abuse.

Addressing the role of foundations, Hamburg said they have been effective at producing good examples, thus alerting the nation to what is possible. "But we haven't made an in-depth attempt to do that in the sports community." Foundations, he said, could do more of that than they have done up to now. They could provide a scouting mechanism, an independent, high-quality review panel. Foundations could also strengthen existing surveys of

research on sports and youth development. They could identify major gaps and the most urgent needs that have a practical significance; determine how to fill such gaps, for example, by providing evidence on the relation of sports to education and health outcomes; and evaluate the conditions under which sports activity and sports organizations are associated with desirable educational outcomes.

Over the past ten years, Carnegie Corporation has promoted policies and practices toward the inclusion of average students and not just stars in middle school and high school sports programs. The Corporation has also attempted to stimulate policymakers and policy advisers to become interested in the potential of sports for youth development. "We pursued that idea with the U.S. attorney general and with others, including members of Congress," Hamburg reported. "There has to be some faith that reasonable people in policy positions will be open to research evidence and best practices conveyed by informed people. It is also important to reach business leaders on opportunities for youth development."

Citing the need for better-trained adults to work in youth sports, Hamburg urged efforts toward a national consensus on standards and an acceptable range of attributes consistent with the latest research findings and the best, most up-to-date practices of mentors, tutors, and counselors. The role of coaches should be seen in a broader context than heretofore — "not only to win games but to win people." There is also a need to involve highly respected current and recent athletes on a large scale in community-based organizations. Another need is to strengthen community councils for children. "There aren't nearly enough of them that are effective, but there are some scattered across the country," Hamburg pointed out. "The ones I am familiar with have not given enough attention to sports and youth development."

In conclusion, a lot of money and prestige is generated by sports in this country, but very little of that has come back to organizations focusing on sports and youth development. Foundations can help to generate social pressure by supporting advocacy organizations that would influence powerful and wealth-producing organizations to pay more serious attention to sports and youth development.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

The Role of Sports in Youth Development
Monday, March 18, 1996

PLACE:	**Carnegie Corporation of New York** **437 Madison Avenue** **New York, New York 10022**
8:30 am–9:00am	**Coffee and refreshments**
9:00 am–9:30 am	**Introduction** **Overview of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development** David A. Hamburg, President, Carnegie Corporation **Overview of *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*** James P. Comer, Meeting Chair Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale University Child Study Center
9:30 am–10:30 am	**Youth Development Needs and Challenges — Health and Education** Robert L. Johnson, M.D., University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey *What are the developmental needs of young adolescents? What are their major health problems and concerns? To what extent are sports programs effective in ameliorating the problems of youth?* Reginald Clark, consultant *What are young adolescents' educational, social, and emotional needs? How can sports programs improve or hinder educational outcomes?*

10:30 am–12:00 pm	**The Role of Organized Sport in the Health and Education of American Children and Youth** Vern D. Seefeldt, Michigan State University Martha Ewing, Michigan State University
12:00 pm–1:00 pm	**Lunch**
1:00 pm–3:00 pm	**General Discussion** James P. Comer *What are the barriers to and ways to increase access to sports? Are there better ways to link sports to other youth development activities?*
3:00 pm–4:00 pm	**How Can Institutions Respond? Next Steps** David A. Hamburg *Schools, Youth Organizations, Churches, Federal and Municipal Agencies, and Foundations*
4:00 pm	**Adjourn**

APPENDIX B

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March 18, 1996

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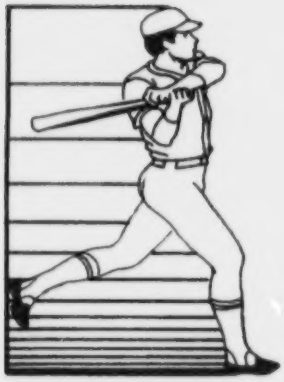
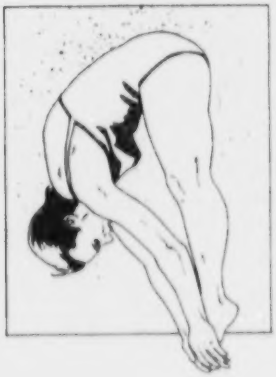
Role of Organized Sport in the Education and Health of American Children and Youth





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Preface

Sports for children and youth are firmly entrenched in American culture. Data from sponsors of youth sports programs reveal that the numbers of participants grows annually, even when the pool of eligible participants does not portend such increases. Thus, the promoters of sports for children are reaching ever larger audiences. Additional variables in the increased number of participants may be the earlier age when sports become available and the greater retention of those who enroll.

This compilation of information attests to the proposition that sports for children can result in beneficial or detrimental effects. We believe that the lessons to be learned through sports have the potential to extend far beyond the fields, courts and pools where the lessons are learned. Tantamount to good experiences in children's sports is the quality of the adult leadership. The content in the following nine chapters identifies the common problems of children's sports and suggests practical solutions to avoiding the problems that seem to consume so many parents and promoters of youth sports.

These materials present a multi-disciplinary view of youth sports. Our goal has been to present the most pertinent and accurate scientific information available, to be used by granting agencies, program providers, scholars and parents of young athletes. We hope, ultimately, that this multi-faceted presentation will lead to the solutions of some problems that we have identified. Informed discussion of these materials could lead to changes in current policies and practices and perhaps stimulate research to resolve some of the issues that we have raised.

The desired beneficiaries of these materials are the millions of young people who embark annually on what they hope will be an enjoyable, skill-enhanced season of play. We hope that the adults who must translate the dreams of the young hopefuls into reality find these materials to be helpful in that process.

Martha Ewing
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Special thanks are extended to Rita Glassman, National Youth Sports Foundation for the Prevention of Athletic Injuries, Needham, MA for providing the names, addresses and telephone numbers of organizations that promote youth sports in the United States and to the representatives from 41 national sports organizations who responded positively to our requests for information.

List of Figures

		Page
Figure 1.	Illustration of the Similarities and Distinctions Between Three Forms of Aggression.	83
Figure 2.	A Sports Violence Typology.	84

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1.	Estimated Percent of Youth Enrolled in Specific Categories of Youth Sports	5
Table 2.	Participation by Boys and Girls in Interscholastic Athletics During the 1995-96 School Year.	12
Table 3.	Characteristics of Selected National Youth Sports Programs, by Sponsoring Organization.	14
Table 4.	Projected School Age Populations for Specific Years, Ages 5, 6, 5-13 and 14-17.	16
Table 5.	Longitudinal Record of Participation in the Top 10 Interscholastic Sports for Boys and Girls	17
Table 6.	Athletics Participation Survey, 1994-95	19
Table 7.	Percent of Participants, By Age, Who Indicated That They Will Not Play Next Year, a Sport They Played This Year	27
Table 8.	Organized, Competitive Sports Versus Everyday Life: A Comparison.	71

List of Appendices

		Page
Appendix A.	Nationally Affiliated Organizations That Promote and Sponsor Youth Sports in the United States.	146
Appendix B.	National Standards for Athletic Coaches.	150
Appendix C.	Pronouncements of Professional Organizations Regarding Youth Sports, Physical Activity, Fitness and Health.	153

Table of Contents

		Page
Preface		i
Acknowledgments		ii
List of Figures		iii
List of Tables		iv
List of Appendices		v
Chapter 1.	Role of Youth Sports in American Culture	1
	Overview of Organized Youth Sports in America	4
	Definition of Youth Sports	7
	Agency-Sponsored Youth Sports Programs	7
	National Youth Organizations	8
	Club Sports Programs	9
	Recreational Programs	9
	School-Sponsored Intramural Programs	10
	Interscholastic Athletic Programs	11
	Characteristics of Youth Sports Programs	11
	Participation and Attrition Patterns in American Youth Sports Programs	15
	Summary and Conclusions	18
Chapter 2.	Barriers to Participation in Youth Sports	21
	Failure to Impart the Health-Related Benefits of Exercise to Children and Youth	22
	Lack of Sufficient Motivation to Acquire Competence	22
	Intellectual Snobbery About Exercise and Sports	23
	Racism	24
	Sexism	24
	Low National Priority of Sports Participation	25
	Low Socio-Economic Status	27
	Fear for Personal Safety	28
	Overzealous Promoters	29
	Summary and Conclusions	30
Chapter 3.	Sports and the Social/Emotional Development of Children and Youth	33
	Potential for Social Development Through Sport	35
	Sports, Self-Esteem, Self-Confidence and Self-Competence	36
	Implications for Social/Emotional Development Through Sport	43
	Summary and Conclusions	46

		Page
Chapter 4.	Promoting Moral Development Through Youth Sports	49
	Morality in the Context of Sport	49
	Fair Play	50
	Sportsmanship	51
	Integrity and Compassion (Character)	52
	Interpreting the Various Models of Moral Development	53
	Social Learning Theory	55
	Rest's Model of Moral Action	57
	Evidence For and Against Sport as Contributing to Moral Development	63
	Delinquency	64
	Aggression	65
	Implementing a Model of Moral Development in a Sports Setting	66
	Summary and Conclusions	67
Chapter 5.	Ethical Issues in Youth Sports	69
	Teaching Independence and Responsibility Versus Compliance and Conformity	69
	Equality of Opportunity for Males and Females	74
	Other Ethical Issues Related to Sports Practice	76
	Equity in Programs, Policies and Expectations for Girls and Minorities	79
	Summary and Conclusions	80
Chapter 6.	Youth Sports as a Deterrent to Negative Behavior	81
	Abatement of Aggression and Violence Through Youth Sports	81
	Youth Sports as a Substitute for Gang Membership	87
	Resiliency and the Role of Significant Others as a Deterrent to Violence	89
	Summary and Conclusions	92
Chapter 7.	Contributions of Sport to Physical Health and Well-Being	93
	Sports and Health	93
	The Direct Health Benefits Rationale	95
	The Positive Skill-Building Rationale	96
	The Replacement Rationale	97
	Injuries and Injury Prevention	97
	Growth and Maturation	99
	Athletes and Substance Abuse	100
	Summary and Conclusions	101
Chapter 8.	The Changing National Scene in Youth Sports	103
	Significant Changes in Youth Sports	104
	Scientific Basis for Practice	104
	Sports as an Alternative to Socially-Undesirable Behavior	105
	Sports as Health	105

	Page
Mandated Education of Coaches	106
Youth Sports in Urban Cities	107
Injuries and Protective Equipment	109
Two Levels of Competition	109
Coaching as a Male-Dominated Profession	110
Increased Roles for Volunteers	110
Summary and Conclusions	111
Chapter 9. Summary and Recommendations	113
Summary	113
Recommendations	115
References	121
Appendices	145
Appendix A	146
Appendix B	150
Appendix C	153

Role of Youth Sports in American Culture

The cornerstone of preventive medicine in the practice of pediatrics is the concept that positive health-related habits initiated early in life provide the basis for life-long well-being.

Tom Rowland, M.D.
In T. Rowland (1990), Exercise and Children's Health, (p. 265).

The opportunity for youth to participate in sports programs has become a common expectation within the American culture. Prior to 1954, most of the organized sport experiences occurred within social agencies such as the YMCAs/YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts (LeUnes & Nation, 1989). Since 1954, the opportunities for sport participation have moved from social agencies and youth organized activities to adult-organized programs. This movement towards adult-organized sport activities is associated with the advent of Little League baseball by Carl Stotz in 1954 in Pennsylvania. In 1954, there were four thousand leagues nationwide (Hale, 1956) with approximately 70,000 participants (Skubic, 1955). By 1989 there were 2.5 million children aged eight to twelve playing on more than 42,000 teams in 28 countries (White, 1987). This growth in organized baseball was limited to males, with less than 1 percent of all Little Leaguers being females (Jennings, 1981).

The rise of organized sport opportunities for girls has increased dramatically since the passage of Title IX in 1972. Although still fewer in overall participation numbers, the number of female participants continues to rise as opportunity, valuing of sport involvement and overall fitness for girls and women has increased.

Within the American culture, being involved in sport programs is highly valued. Duda (1985) reported that high school students would rather succeed at sport than academics and that failure in sport was perceived to be worse than failure in academics, particularly for adolescent males. Youth have reported that they will be more popular with their peers if they are

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involved in sport than if they are good students in school (Coleman, 1961). Thus, for many students involvement in sport is a primary avenue to enhance status among one's peers and is a motivation to stay in school. Academic achievement is often accomplished through encouragement of the coaches and the valuing of an education by the student-athlete's parents.

Success in sports is more important to adolescents than success in academics.

The importance associated with participation in organized sport programs has been associated with both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, Jeziorski (1994) reported that participants in co-curricular activities (voluntary activities, such as sport, debate teams, music groups, student governance, associated with educational institutions) generally earn higher grades, behave better in the classroom and drop out of school less often than non-participants. As a result of his interviews with teachers and school administrators, Jeziorski learned that these positive outcomes were attributable to the discipline and work ethic associated with co-curricular activities which carry over into the classroom. In addition, interpersonal skills are often acquired through participation in co-curricular activities which results from integrating youth from diverse backgrounds. The key is to link participation in sport, something which is highly valued by adolescent youth, to academic performance.

Corroborating the interview data from teachers and administrators is a report from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (1986). Based on a longitudinal study of high school students, co-curricular participants, when compared to non-participants, put more time into completing homework, had higher scores on the standardized tests and were much less likely to have a 2.0 or lower grade point average. In addition, those students who earned more course credits tended to be more involved in co-curricular programs.

The Women's Sports Foundation (1989) reported the results of high school sport involvement on academic achievement by ethnic and racial participants. Results indicated a positive relationship between sports participation and grade point average, but the results were not uniform across races and gender. Specifically, for Hispanic and White females and White males, participation in school sports had a significant positive correlation with higher grades. While not statistically different, there was a trend for Hispanic males and Black females and males to have higher grades than non-sport participants. In addition, the study revealed significantly higher scores

on the standardized achievement tests in vocabulary, reading and mathematics for all six subgroups of school participants when compared to non-participants.

The issue of fitness and health of our youth has been debated since the 1950's when Kraus and Hirschland (1954) reported that American children were generally unfit when compared with similar groups of European children. Over the next 40 years the definition of fitness and the methods for assessing fitness in youth have changed dramatically. Corbin and Pangrazi (1992) demonstrated that using criterion-referenced health-related standards rather than norm-referenced standards resulted in different conclusions about youth fitness. Specifically, they reported that there is little evidence that children and youth are less fit today than in previous decades. This is not to say that all children have attained some acceptable level of fitness. Blair (1992) surmised that approximately 20 percent of children are probably at risk of developing chronic, debilitating diseases as adults because of low fitness and that educators should make more vigorous efforts to help these children find more active lifestyles.

Youth involved in physical activities fare better academically, interpersonally and are healthier than youth who are not involved.

The question receiving more attention today is not whether children are sufficiently fit, but rather how can educators and promoters of youth sport programs sustain the activity levels of youth across the late childhood and adolescent years. Freedson and Rowland (1992) presented data that indicated that children's habitual physical activity levels are low and that these levels decline rather dramatically from childhood through adolescence. As Weiss (1993) reported, these data parallel the research on attrition from youth sport programs, especially among females. If we are to change this pattern of declining participation in sport and physical activity, Freedson and Rowland (1992) contended that "fun must be a primary component of any physical activity program for children to create the best possible scenario for them to maintain an active lifestyle throughout adolescence and the teenage years" (p. 135).

While participation in youth sports can not provide solutions to all of our concerns about academic achievement and physical fitness, the evidence surrounding the role of youth sports in the American culture suggests that children who are involved in physical activities fare better academically, have higher interpersonal skills, are more team-oriented and are more healthy as determined by fitness standards. The remainder of the chapter will detail the

various relationships between involvement in organized sport and the impact of this involvement in both the health and education of American children and youth.

The association between the involvement of children and youth in organized sport and their health and academic achievements are placed in perspective by a brief overview of youth sports in America, the characteristics of current youth sport programs and a more detailed account of the participation and attrition patterns in sport programs of American youth.

Overview of Organized Youth Sports in America

Participation in organized sport has become a common rite of childhood in the United States. Since the 1940s a variety of laws and policies enacted by national, state and community organizations have provided our children with an abundance of free time (Berryman, 1996). Agencies began sponsoring sports and recreational activities to provide wholesome leisure-time pursuits, initially designed to keep boys out of trouble. Schools sponsored intramural sport programs to provide instruction in sport skills, plus an opportunity to engage in controlled, competitive activities (Berryman, 1996).

The opportunities to engage in sport programs is unequal across social classes.

Although educators, parents, child welfare workers and leaders of agency-sponsored sport programs did not always agree about the benefits and the objectives of youth sport programs, the notion of providing "wholesome, character-building activities to occupy the leisure time of children to enable them to make the transition from childhood to adulthood" (Berryman, 1996, p. 6) became an accepted view. Participation in organized youth sport programs flourished. The popularity of organized sports for children and youth has resulted in estimates of annual participation ranging from 20 million (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978) to 35 million (Martens, 1986). An updated estimate or participation in sports by children and youth, aged 6-18 years is provided in Table 1. A list of selected organizations with national affiliations that sponsor or promote youth sports in provided in Appendix A.

While the number of youth involved in organized sport programs is impressive, the opportunities to engage in sport programs is unequal across social classes. Greater opportunities exist among the children who grow up

Table 1. Estimated Percent of Youth Enrolled in Specific Categories of Youth Sports.*

Category of Activity	Percent of All Eligible Enrollees[a]	Approximate N of Participants
Agency-Sponsored Sports (i.e., Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football)	45	22,000,000
Club Sports (i.e., Pay for Services, Gymnastics, Ice Skating, Swimming)	5	2,368,700
Recreational Sports Programs (Everyone Plays—Sponsored by Recreational Departments)	30	14,512,200
Intramural Sports (Middle, Junior, Senior High Schools)	10	451,000
Interscholastic Sports (Middle, Junior, Senior High Schools)	12[b] 40[c]	1,741,200 5,776,820

* Total population of eligible participants in the 5-17 year age category (in 1995) was estimated to be 48,374,000 by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1989.

[a] Totals do not equal 100 percent because of multiple-category participation by some athletes.

[b] Percent of total population aged 5-17 years.

[c] Percent of total high school-aged population (N = 14,510,000).

in middle and upper classes where resources enable adults to sponsor, organize and administer programs for their children (Ponessa, 1992).

Assessing the opportunities and contribution of sports to the development of children and youth becomes even more timely in light of the mounting evidence that the quality of life for many young people is declining (Dryfoos, 1990). For example, one of five children, including 46 percent of African American and 40 percent of Hispanic American children will grow up in poverty (Rauch, 1989). The implications of social class, the prevalence of single-parent households and the combination of familial, institutional and social influences have been associated with the category of adolescents labeled "at risk" (Dryfoos, 1990). However unclear their causal origin, the problems that confront adolescents "at risk" are characterized by violence, including rape, homicide and suicide; a general disaffection with traditional institutions and authority including truancy and delinquency and unhealthy and irresponsible behavior, manifested in drug abuse and pregnancy at young ages (Seefeldt, Ewing, & Walk, 1991).

Parents encourage their children to participate in sport, but report that coaches take the game too seriously.

At first glance the proposal that sport can be used as a venue to alleviate the problems of adolescent violence and stress, social alienation and disaffection and unhealthy behavior seems inappropriate. Some would suggest that such overwhelming problems require more direct interventions for their solution. However, there is ample evidence that the involvement of youth in sport has led to the inculcation of responsible social behaviors and greater academic success (Jeziorski, 1994). Sports have often been cited as the medium that provided the contact between wayward youth and influential individuals. Sport has been credited with providing a sense of affiliation, a feeling of confidence in one's physical abilities, an appreciation of one's personal health and fitness and the development of social bonds with individuals and institutions.

There remain, however, mixed feelings about organized youth sport programs. Parents who were surveyed about their beliefs about youth involvement in sport programs reported both positive and negative aspects associated with sport involvement. American parents supported the sport involvement of both girls and boys; 90 percent of parents reported that they encouraged their children to participate in sports; and 62 percent indicated their children participated in some type of organized sport activity (Miller Lite Report, 1983). Conversely, 85 percent of the American public indicated that

coaches in organized programs took games too seriously and that too much emphasis was placed on winning and not enough on the physical and psychological development of the participants (Miller Lite Report, 1983).

Before addressing the questions raised about the positive and negative aspects associated with sport involvement, it is important that this review provide some framework for its discussion of youth sport programs. The various forms of youth sport programs will be defined in the next section.

Definition of Youth Sports

The term *youth sports* in American culture has been applied to any of the various athletic programs that provide a systematic sequence of practices and contests for children and youth (Seefeldt, Ewing, & Walk 1991). In reality, these sports experiences differ greatly in competitive level, length of season, cost to competitors, qualifications of coaches and officials and skill levels of athletes. Six categories of youth sport programs will be defined: namely, *agency-sponsored programs, national youth service organizations, club sports, recreation programs, intramural programs* and *interscholastic programs.* Of these six categories, four are community-based and two are conducted within the schools. The distinguishing characteristics of each program category are described in the following sections.

Agency-Sponsored Youth Sports Programs The term *agency-sponsored* is used to describe local sports programs that are sponsored by service clubs with national affiliations. Agency-sponsored distinguishes them from programs that are sponsored by schools and recreation departments and from those included under the category of club sports. A distinguishing feature of agency-sponsored sports is that an agency within a community often assumes the responsibility for one sport, to the exclusion of all others. In this model numerous sports may by sponsored and administered by various community agencies, resulting in a variety of sponsorships, but without a common structure or philosophy among the programs within a community.

Agency-sponsored sports often assume the responsibility for one sport, to the exclusion of all others.

Agencies in local communities are usually affiliated with national sponsors, thereby increasing the competitive opportunities of their participants by exposing them to district, regional or national level competition. Agency-sponsored athletic programs are therefore greatly influenced by the rules and regulations of their respective national governing

body, whose regulations are mandated in all competition beyond the local community level. Examples of local agencies that frequently sponsor sports programs for children and youth are Lions Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs and Police Athletic Leagues. Examples of national programs with which the agency-sponsored programs often affiliate are Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football, U.S.A. Hockey and the American Youth Soccer Organization.

National Youth Organizations Agencies within this category sponsor a variety of programs for children and youth, including sports. Typical of organizations in which sporting experiences play an important, but not exclusive role, are Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Girls Incorporated, YWCA, YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire Boys and Girls and 4-H Clubs. The relative importance of sports within each agency's total set of program offerings varies from organization to organization and from community to community within each national structure. For example, sports constitute a significant proportion of the programming in many Boys and Girls Clubs, and Girls Incorporated reports that 99 percent of its local affiliates offer sports programs for girls and young women. The facility-based agencies (including Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Incorporated, YMCA and YWCA) have tended to place more emphasis on sports programs than have the troop- or group-based programs (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire and 4-H), although there has been some change in this trend within the past few years. For example, Boy Scouts of America recently developed a new sports-oriented membership category, *Varsity Scouts*, which currently serves some 59,000 boys ages 13 and over.

All of the programs within the category of National Youth Organizations tend to share a commitment to implement their sports programs within the broader context of youth development and a recognition that sports programs are appealing to and popular with young people. This latter view was confirmed by an alumni survey conducted by Boys Clubs of America during the mid-1980s; respondents to the survey indicated that sports were the most important program component in attracting and retaining them as members of the Boys Club. Other common features of the sports programs offered by national youth organizations include: a hierarchy of activity that generally involves both professional and volunteer leadership; national standards that guide local program implementation and centralized training and technical assistance that support nationally-developed program efforts.

National sports programs differ considerably in content and approach. Three organizations—the YMCA, Girls Incorporated and Boys and Girls Clubs of America—received financial support from the 1984 Olympic Torch Relay Event, which enabled them to develop new national sports programs. Girls Incorporated developed the *Sporting Chance Program* to expand sports opportunities for girls and young women; this multi-part program includes a basic sports skills course, called *Steppingstones* for girls ages 6-8, and a sports exploration course, *Sports Unlimited,* for early adolescents. Boys and Girls Clubs of America used its share of the Olympic Torch proceeds to introduce new sports, including team handball and table tennis, to its members. In addition to participating in such national programs, individual local chapters of these organizations may also coordinate leagues and have some affiliation with sport-specific national governing bodies.

Club Sports Program *Club Sports* is a term that is commonly reserved for sports programs that conduct year-around practices and competitive opportunities. The sports of swimming, gymnastics, wrestling and figure skating are frequently included in this category. *Club sports* are distinguished by their year-around activities, their fee-for-services structure, the employment of salaried coaches, their use of special facilities and the national structure of their organizations.

Club sports usually have a hierarchy of skill development that begins prior to age six and continues throughout the high school age level. During the high school years competitors often participate in the seasonal interscholastic programs of their specific sport and then join the club sport at the termination of the interscholastic season. Local club sports such as swimming, wrestling and track and field often affiliate with programs offered by the American Athletic Union (AAU) during the off-season in an attempt to include year-around training and national competition for their participants. Local interscholastic coaches are also likely to encourage the off-season participation of their athletes in club sports, thus providing year-long opportunities for conditioning, training and skill development.

Recreational Programs Although recreational programs sponsor various levels of athletic competition, the term recreational program has become synonymous with programs that emphasize fun, participation for all, physical skill development and social interaction in lieu of a win-at-all-costs

philosophy. The pervasive philosophy of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has influenced recreation programs throughout the United States to the degree that maximum participation, rather than high levels of competition, is the trademark of the programs that are sponsored by departments of recreation.

Competition in recreation programs is usually confined to intracity competition. Participation is available to all who seek it, devoid of tryouts, league standings, all-star contests and post season competition. Although the competitive level in recreation programs ranges widely, a pervasive philosophy that emphasizes maximum participation often places recreation programs in the position of "second class" programs to the more competitive, agency-sponsored programs with national affiliations. Representatives of agency-sponsored programs often recruit the most skillful athletes from recreation programs and enroll them in the more competitive programs.

School-Sponsored Intramural Programs The coexistence of intramural (competition between teams within a school) and interscholastic programs (competition between teams from different schools) at the junior and senior high school levels is in question, primarily because both programs compete for the same facilities, clients, administrators, finances and prestige within the school population. The ideal hierarchy of program services is to provide a physical education program for all students, to be followed by an intramural program that is designed for all who wish to apply the skills and knowledge learned in physical education in a competitive setting, to be followed by an interscholastic program for students who desire higher levels of competition. In reality, intramural programs at the middle, junior, and senior high school levels have frequently been abdicated by educators in favor of the more popular interscholastic programs.

Currently, intramural programs are most successful at the middle and junior high school levels where the competition for resources between them and the interscholastic programs is less intense than at the high school level. The future of intramural programs at the high school level appears bleak, with little prospect for a change in the present situation that results in a major share of the resources being allocated for the interscholastic programs. The outlook for intramural programs at the middle and junior high school levels, too, is discouraging because of the trend for more interscholastic competition at these levels, thus further eroding the resources that could potentially be

directed to intramural programs. Without intramural programs at the high school level, it will be up to community sponsors to provide sport programs for adolescent youth who do not earn a place on the interscholastic team.

Interscholastic Athletic Programs Interscholastic athletic competition includes the organized interschool sports participation of boys and girls at the middle, junior and senior high school levels. Interscholastic athletic competition within the United States is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFSHSA), with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. The NFSHSA is comprised of 51 State Associations, representing 20,000 high schools, 500,000 coaches and over 5,000,000 athletes. A primary purpose of the NFSHSA, under their motto of "the other half of education," is to provide universal rules, regulations and guidelines for the conduct of interscholastic sports. Table 2 provides information about the extent of involvement by boys and girls in the nation's interscholastic athletic programs.

Characteristics of Youth Sports Programs

The trend during the last two decades has been toward greater accommodation of children 4 to 6 years of age.

Opportunities for involvement in organized sports begin at ages five and six in most of the team sports such as ice hockey, baseball and soccer and in many of the individual sports such as gymnastics, figure skating, bowling and swimming. Although data on sport availability by age indicate that young children have historically been included in non-school sports programs (Martens, 1986), the trend during the last two decades has been toward greater accommodation of children four, five and six years of age.

The propensity for organized sports to recruit and attract children as early as ages five and six may have been fueled by the reduction in physical education programs nationwide. The erosion of physical education programs from daily offerings to sessions only once or twice a week may have prompted parents to seek other opportunities for their children to learn sports skills. Thus, organized sports programs found an available audience of young participants awaiting the call for registration of the next sports season.

The trend for greater availability of instruction in skills and opportunities for competition at a younger age has been accompanied by greater skill levels of the young athletes, but it also has concomitant consequences of earlier attrition and injuries due to overuse syndromes.

Table 2. Participation by Boys and Girls in Interscholastic Athletics During the 1995-96 School Year.

	Boys		Girls	
	Number of Schools	Number of Participants	Number of Schools	Number of Participants
Archery	16	107	5	10
Badminton	*197	3,313	*364	8,058
Baseball	14,174	444,476	75	**1,340
Basketball	16,574	545,596	16,198	445,869
Bowling	709	8,100	715	7,322
Canoeing	9	191	12	271
Comp. Spirit Squad	*246	**521	1,913	32,758
Crew	42	1,037	36	966
Cross country	11,360	168,203	10,774	140,187
Decathlon	36	128	4	12
Equestrian	23	78	33	344
Fencing	38	692	34	527
Field hockey			1,460	56,142
Football				
11-man	13,004	957,573	79	**791
9-man	223	6,179		
8-man	599	13,369	2	**15
6-man	138	4,359	2	**13
Golf	11,394	140,011	5,469	**39,634
Gymnastics	177	2,635	*1,522	19,398
Heptathlon			16	63
Ice hockey	*985	**24,281	165	**1,471
Judo	10	142	5	23
Lacrosse	539	24,114	375	14,704
Pentathlon	1	15	2	4
Riflery	194	1,882	125	622
Skiing				
(Cross Country)	361	4,153	354	4,036
(Alpine)	365	5,809	347	4,509
Soccer	*8,182	**283,728	6,526	209,287
Softball				
(Fast Pitch)	83	1,932	11,452	305,217
(Slow Pitch)	8	161	1,523	34,195
Swimming & diving	*4,852	**81,000	4,948	**111,360
Team tennis	381		381	
Tennis	9,214	136,534	9,165	146,573
Track & field				
(Indoor)	1,861	41,950	1,770	37,385
(Outdoor)	14,505	454,645	14,410	379,060
Volleyball	1,381	**31,553	12,669	357,576
Water polo	430	10,238	173	**4,564
Weight lifting	449	13,615	112	2,169
Wrestling	8,677	221,162	225	1,164
Other	67	404	63	168

* Includes some co-educational teams

** Includes girls playing on boys' teams and boys playing on girls' teams

Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations, based on competition at the High School Level in the 1995-96 school year.

Another questionable trend is to extend the sport season, thus making it more difficult for children to participate in two or more sports, annually.

The assumption underlying the trend toward decreasing the age of eligibility for competition while concomitantly increasing the length of the sports season is that the fundamental elements of complex sport skills must be introduced and perfected prior to adolescence. Consequently, adolescents who have not developed the prerequisite motor skills are not likely to be selected to receive the kind of instruction that is needed for them to be competitive with their age peers. Thus, the prevailing opinion of coaches is that opportunities for successful experiences in athletics during the adolescent years are dependent upon a foundation that must be built from experiences in childhood.

The extent to which selected national governing agencies provide some of the essential ingredients of youth sports programs is shown in Table 3. At first glance the matrix appears to be impressive, but the reader is cautioned that these responses merely indicate that the programs' provisions are available. There is no indication of how well the programs are meeting their objectives in the specific categories. Nor is there evidence that the national sports agencies conduct systematic evaluations to determine how well their clients are being served by the local agencies that affiliate with the national organization. The primary criteria for affiliation with national sports agencies appear to be a willingness to pay the dues for annual membership and an agreement to play according to the rules provided by the national agency.

A notable shortcoming of national sport program characteristics is the lack of special provisions for children-at-risk.

Table 3 indicates that most of the nationally-affiliated programs provided competitive experiences for very young children. Choices of co-educational or single-sex competition were available in all of the programs, as was the opportunity to compete locally, as well as through a competitive structure all the way to the national level. All of the statements of mission, goals and objectives except one emphasized fun, skill development and ethical behavior. None prohibited participation because of an inability to pay enrollment or instructional fees. Conspicuous by their absence were references to winning or indications that, at specific levels, intense competition would be required of the participants.

Table 3. Characteristics of Selected National Youth Sports Programs, by Sponsoring Organization.

Organization	Inclusive Ages	Single Gender & Co-Ed Comp	Competition at National Level	Open to All	Emphasize Fun, Social & Skill Dev.	Fee for Play
Amateur Athletic Union	—	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
American Youth Soccer Org.	5-19	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Dixie Youth Baseball	8 and under 18	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Hershey Track and Field	—	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Little League Baseball	6-18	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
National Jr. Tennis League	8-18	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
National Youth Sport Programs	10-16	yes	no	yes	yes	no
Pony Baseball	5-18	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Pop Warner Football	6-16	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Soccer Assoc. for Youth	6-18	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
USA Hockey	5-adults	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
United States Volleyball Assn.	6-adults	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
United States Wrestling Assn.	8-adults	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Young American Bowling Alnce.	8 and under 21	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

The most notable shortcoming in the list of program characteristics was the lack of special provisions for children-at-risk. Although representatives from each of the organizations indicated that there were no restrictions regarding race, creed or socio-economic status, only three offourteen organizations represented in Table 3 compiled data on the race and socio-economic status of their participants. These organizations were also the ones that made special provisions to place programs in communities where they were accessible by children-at-risk.

Although nearly all of the national governing agencies charged a fee for memberships and assessed additional fees for tournaments, such fees were modest and should not pose a barrier to participation. However, the sports of gymnastics, tennis, golf, bowling, figure skating and ice hockey required users fees for facilities, instructors and/or equipment that were borne in large part by the participants (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996). The prospect of having to apply for "scholarships" in order to participate in these sports may be a deterrent to youth from the lower socio-economic strata. In addition, the location of programs that require special facilities is often in suburbs, thus making many of them inaccessible to youth from urban areas.

Participation and Attrition Patterns in American Youth Sports Programs

Each of the representatives from the national governing agencies listed on Table 3 reported a general trend of increased participation in their programs during the last five years. These reports of increased participation are in concert with the data in Table 4, which indicate that the age group of 5-13 years has increased in number since 1985 in proportion to some other age groups in the United States.

Projections from the National Center for Education Statistics (1989) indicate a slight increase in the potential number of 5-13 year old youth sport participants and a slight decline in the potential number of 14-17 year old participants (see Table 4). These data suggest that any increases in youth sports participation are due to changes within a relatively stable pool. Potential explanations are that either the increase is due to (1) a shift from participation in the less competitive recreational programs to the agency-sponsored programs that have national affiliations, (2) greater recruitment and involvement of the younger-aged clients, or (3) program sponsors are

providing greater accessibility to youth sports, resulting in the participation of a higher proportion of the potential enrollees. Quite likely each of these possibilities contributed to the greater involvement of youth in agency-sponsored sports programs.

Table 4. Projected School Age Populations for Specific Years, Ages 5, 6, 5-13 and 14-17.*

Year	5 years	6 years	5-13 years	14-17 years
1985	3,548,000	3,428,000	30,000,000	14,865,000
1986	3,605,000	3,555,000	30,351,000	14,797,000
1987	3,651,000	3,612,000	30,823,000	14,467,000
1988	3,668,000	3,657,000	31,374,000	13,970,000
1989	3,604,000	3,674,000	31,793,000	13,476,000
1990	3,736,000	3,609,000	32,393,000	13,237,000
1991	3,719,000	3,741,000	32,827,000	13,334,000
1992	3,724,000	3,724,000	33,243,000	13,538,000
1993	3,734,000	3,729,000	33,549,000	13,774,000
1994	3,745,000	3,739,000	33,738,000	14,187,000
1995	3,730,000	3,750,000	33,864,000	14,510,000

* Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, December, 1989.

Girls' participation in sports has continued to increase since 1975-76 while boys' participation has leveled off.

Reports on participation rates by the National Federation of State High School Associations (Seefeldt & Haubenstricker, 1987) (see Table 5) reflect the census data in Table 4 for sports participation by boys. Only soccer recorded an increase in participants from 1975-76 to 1985-86. However, girls increased their rates of participation in four of the eight sports in which comparisons were available. These increases are probably due to a combined shift in interest of girls, for whom interscholastic sports were a relatively new experience in 1975-76, and to the growth of specific agency-sponsored sports that influenced their interscholastic participation.

Table 5. Longitudinal Record of Participation in the Top 10 Interscholastic Sports for Boys and Girls.

	Boys		Girls	
	1975-76	**1995-96**	**1975-76**	**1995-96**
Football	1,077,599	957,573	—	—
Basketball	688,410	545,596	387,507	445,869
Track/field	644,813	454,645	395,271	379,060
Baseball/softball	399,900	444,476	133,458	305,217
Wrestling	334,107	221,162	—	—
Cross-country	204,087	168,203	30,899	140,187
Tennis	143,970	136,534	112,166	146,573
Golf	154,457	140,011	32,190	39,634
Swimming	125,234	81,000	85,013	111,360
Soccer	112,743	283,728	—	209,287
Volleyball	—	—	245,032	357,576
Field hockey	—	—	—	56,142
Total	3,885,320	3,432,928	1,506,364	2,190,905

Table 6 shows the total participation patterns in interscholastic sports for boys and girls. The enrollment figures for boys declined during the 1980s but have recovered to record their sixth highest total since 1971-72 during the 1994-95 school year. The participation of girls has shown a steady increase, reaching an all-time high during the 1994-95 school year.

When viewing trends in patterns of participation and attrition in sports, the assumption often is that 100 percent of the youth in a community should be participating annually in a program. In today's society there are many choices of activities that youth and their parents must make. For example, the question of how to balance musical interests of a child with sport activities may be too demanding in terms of time, so the child must choose one good activity over another good activity. Many factors may preclude youth from participating in sport, such as direct and indirect costs, practices and games held at times that are inconvenient to the participants or their parents and diverse interests of the youth. These data do not reveal the time commitment required by youth for their many activities. For children to derive the positive benefits associated with participation in sport, there must be a balance between school, sports and life activities.

For children to derive the benefits associated with participation in sport, there must be a balance between school, sports and life activities.

Summary and Conclusions

Being involved in sport programs is highly valued by children and adolescents. Participants in sports programs have benefited in numerous ways from their involvement in sports. Participants earn higher grades, show better deportment in school, develop better interpersonal skills and drop out of school less than non-participants. Teachers attribute these outcomes to the discipline and work ethic required for continued involvement in sport programs. In addition, involvement in sport improve fitness levels. One of the unsolved problems relates to the low involvement of urban youth in sports, especially those who are physically unfit and sedentary because of their socio-economic status.

Table 6. Athletics Participation Survey, 1994-95*

Year	Boy Participants	Year	Girl Participants	Total	Percent of Boys Total
1971-72	3,666,917	1971-72	294,015	3,960,932	1
1972-73	3,770,621	1972-73	817,073	4,587,694	2
1973-74	4,070,125	1973-74	1,300,169	5,370,294	32
1975-76	4,109,021	1975-76	1,645,039	5,754,060	40
1977-78	4,367,442	1977-78	2,083,040	6,450,482	48
1978-79	3,709,512	1978-79	1,854,400	5,563,912	50
1979-80	3,517,829	1979-80	1,750,264	5,268,093	50
1980-81	3,503,124	1980-81	1,853,789	5,356,913	53
1981-82	3,409,081	1981-82	1,810,671	5,219,752	53
1982-83	3,355,558	1982-83	1,779,972	5,135,530	53
1983-84	3,303,599	1983-84	1,747,346	5,050,945	53
1984-85	3,354,284	1984-85	1,757,884	5,112,168	52
1985-86	3,344,275	1985-86	1,807,121	5,151,396	54
1986-87	3,364,082	1986-87	1,836,356	5,200,438	55
1987-88	3,425,777	1987-88	1,849,684	5,275,461	54
1988-89	3,416,844	1988-89	1,839,352	5,256,196	54
1989-90	3,398,192	1989-90	1,858,659	5,256,851	55
1990-91	3,406,355	1990-91	1,892,316	5,298,671	56
1991-92	3,426,853	1991-92	1,940,801	5,367,654	57
1992-93	3,416,389	1992-93	1,997,489	5,413,878	58
1993-94	✧3,478,530	1993-94	✧2,124,755	5,603,285	61
1994-95	✧3,536,359	1994-95	✧2,240,461	5,776,820	63

*Source: National Federation of State High School Associations, Kansas City, MO, 1995.

✧Total does not include 11,698 participants in coeducational sports.

✧Total does not include 17,609 participants in coeducational sports.

For purposes of this review, youth sports programs in the United States were divided into six categories, according to common characteristics. The six categories are agency-sponsored, national youth service organizations, club sports, recreational programs, school sponsored intramural programs and interscholastic programs. By far the largest number of youth participants are involved in the non-school programs. In general, participation in the non-school sports for both males and females has increased during the last two decades, while the participation of boys in interscholastic programs decreased in the 1980s, but began to increase again in 1990, reaching its sixth largest enrollment in a 25 year period. Girls' participation in interscholastic sports increased in four of eight sports for which comparisons over the 25 years were possible. Total participation in girls interscholastic sports was the highest in its 25 year history during the 1994-95 season.

Barriers to Participation in Youth Sports

> *It is clear that primary prevention services, and sports, recreation and youth development in particular, must be elevated to the level of essential services, or the cost of essential services will continue to escalate.*
>
> Leonard Smith, President, Skillman Foundation
> Recreating Recreation in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park, 1995, p. 2.

The suggestion that barriers to participation in youth sports constitute a national dilemma may seem like a paradox to the casual observer of the national scene. Newspapers, journals, radio and television constantly remind us of America's obsession with sports. However, closer scrutiny reveals that sports in America represent a highly exclusionary process, with only the elite performers accorded a share of the spotlight. The headlines fail to account for the millions of young people who seek to participate or who would continue in organized sports were it not for the restrictions that are inherent in the adult version of highly-organized competitive sports for children. In fairness to the several million adults who annually volunteer to coach youth sports, it is only through the efforts of these volunteers that youth sports are able to record their annual record-breaking participation rates.

The consequences of denying or restricting participation in sports and physical activity to children and youth has been addressed by educators, scientists, medical personnel and parents (Malina, 1992; McGinnis, 1992; White, 1992; Williams, 1993). White, in an article entitled *Sports: Barriers to Participation* (1992), placed the barriers into six categories: (1) failure of the American public to understand the role of exercise in preserving physical and psychological health; (2) lack of motivation to do what is good and right for ourselves; (3) intellectual snobbery about exercise and sports; (4) racism; (5) sexism; and (6) the low national priority for participation in exercise and sports. Although these broad categories include most of the specific barriers, we have added (7) low socio-economic status; (8) fear for personal safety; and (9) over-zealous promoters to the list. Each category will be discussed

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briefly, followed by a summary of recommendations for removing specific impediments to participation in sports.

Failure to Impart the Health-Related Benefits of Exercise to Children and Youth

Despite the estimated four billion dollars spent annually in the United States on fitness equipment and apparel, the nation's children and youth appear to be losing the battle of acquiring health-related physical fitness (Gortmaker et al, 1990; Haskell, 1995; Kuntzleman & Reiff, 1992). Children are heavier, have more subcutaneous fat and a greater proportion are regarded as sedentary, compared to just a decade ago. Concurrently, physical education programs are being eroded or eliminated to make room for curricular offerings that are deemed to be more useful to the high school students (Chicago Tribune, 1995; Seefeldt, 1996). Although youth sports are regarded by many parents as a suitable substitute for physical education classes, there are major differences in offerings, instruction, inclusion of participants and outcomes. Ideally, the physical education programs should provide the basis of fundamental movement skills so that children could pursue a wide variety of physical interests, including various sports.

Children are heavier, have more body fat and are more sedentary than just 10 years ago.

Lack of a motor basis from which to compete successfully with peers in organized sports relegates all but the motorically gifted and physically fit aspirants to the sidelines (Pivarnik, 1995; Tyler, 1991). If the discretionary time of young individuals is not devoted to positive skill-building activities, then the potential for involvement in numerous socially-unacceptable behaviors is increased (Farrell, 1990; Hechinger, 1992; Robbins, 1991; Takanishi, 1993). The inability or unwillingness of adults to provide for constructive experiences in sports during the leisure hours of youth looms as a formidable barrier, but it must be addressed in order to provide a more positive environment for children to learn the skills of a diverse society (Smith, 1995).

Lack of Sufficient Motivation to Acquire Competence

Approximately 2.5 million adults annually volunteer their time as coaches of youth sports teams (Martens, 1984). Most of these coaches are adults who leave coaching as soon as their children cease to be interested or eligible for additional sports competition. Impressive as this volunteer work

force is in its dedication to the needs of youth, it is insufficient in magnitude and competence to provide the knowledge, skills and supervision required by the estimated 25 million youth whose sports participation depends on volunteer coaches.

As many as 90 percent of America's 2.5 million volunteer coaches have no formal preparation.

There is common agreement that the quality of the youth sports experience depends on the competence of the adult leaders; most specifically, the coach. Thus, educational programs for volunteer coaches would seem to be in demand, but such is not the case. At least four generic programs for coaches exist at the national level and numerous other sports-specific programs are in existence through sports with national affiliations (Campbell, 1993; Feigley, 1988; Martens, 1984). Yet, the vast majority of youth sports coaches, estimated to be as high as 90 percent, have no formal education in coaching techniques, first aid, injury prevention or emergency care (Kimiecki, 1988; Milne, 1990; Partlow, 1995; Seefeldt, 1992; Seefeldt & Milligan, 1992; Siegel & Newhof, 1992; Sisley, 1985). Clearly, the mandatory education of coaches to meet at least the first level of competency as stated in the **National Standards for Athletic Coaches** (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 1995) will have an immediate, beneficial effect on the sports experiences of millions of children. (A list of the 37 standards, by domain is included in Appendix B. The 957 competencies associated with the standards are not included.)

Intellectual Snobbery About Exercise and Sports

Although there may be some aversion by adults to become involved in exercise and sports, this attitude is hardly a major barrier in the sports participation of youth. More likely the reluctance to participate is aimed at specific sports and has more to do with safety, fear of injury and the psychological well-being of the young athletes than with opposition to the exercise itself. Recent reports concerning the dietary practices of female performers in ballet, figure skating, gymnastics, swimming and tennis (Caine & Garrick, 1996; Caine, Lindner, Mandelbaum & Sands, 1996; Lincoln, 1982; Nash, 1987; Ryan, 1995; Swift, 1995) may have sounded a cautionary note to the parents of young girls. Concurrently, the violence of football and ice hockey and the weight reduction techniques of wrestlers may result in a disinclination of boys to join these sports and such characteristics may also contribute to their unacceptably high attrition in membership (American

College of Sports Medicine, 1976; Montelpare et al, 1996; Mueller et al, 1996; Wroble, 1996).

Racism

Although accusations of racism are common in intercollegiate and professional sports, there is little evidence that race is directly involved in team selection in youth sports. None of the 42 youth sports organizations that were contacted about their operational procedures for this report kept records according to race. Generally, youth sports teams were comprised of individuals within a community or specific geographical area. Whether competence, rather than any other variable, was the determining factor in team membership is not known, but experiential evidence suggests that socio-economic conditions, rather than race, are the primary factors that exclude children and youth from sports programs.

The most direct evidence that opportunity in relation to race had a direct effect on participation rates was presented by Seefeldt Ewing, and Walk (1991) who reported that the proportion of African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American participants on teams increased at the high school level, as compared to competition in non-school-sponsored programs at ages 14 and under. Apparently equal opportunity to compete and the requirement that the schools, rather than the community or family, purchased the equipment and apparel and maintained the facilities permitted more youth from racial minority backgrounds to participate in sports at the high school level.

Sexism

Among the many forms of sexism in sports perhaps the most pervasive and devastating is the lack of equal opportunities for girls to compete with programs offered for boys. Despite the tremendous gains in sports participation made by girls and women during the last 30 years, there is still a persistent gap in the enrollment figures between males and females. Data at the interscholastic level (see Table 6) indicate that the total participation of girls is currently only 39 percent of the total participation in interscholastic athletics. The encouraging news is that there has been a slow but steady climb toward equity in the percent of female participants, from 32 percent of the males' participation in 1973-74 to 63 percent in 1994-95.

The gains in participation by girls at the interscholastic level since 1972 are a direct result of participation rates in non-school, agency-sponsored sports. A survey of non-school sports participation (N = 94,500) in 1978 (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports) reported that the ratio of girls to boys was 3:5. In a nationwide sample involving 26,600 participants (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1988), the ratio of girls to boys was also 3:5. Some of the disparity in participation is attributable to a later entry of girls into organized sports. The average age for initial participation on an organized sports team for boys was age eight, while the mean age of entry for girls was age 10. Moreover, the drop-out rate of girls at younger ages was higher than that of boys, especially when co-ed composition of teams was mandated.

Fewer girls participate in sports. They start at older ages and drop out at greater rates.

The greatest disparity in the youth sports scene is in the ratio of women to men who coach these young athletes. In 1978 (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports) the female-to-male ratio of coaches in Michigan was 1:9. Although figures for the gender of coaches in agency-sponsored sports are not available at the national level, there is no reason to believe that this is a local occurrence. At the interscholastic and intercollegiate levels where the motto once was "women coaches for girls' and women's sports," the percent of women who coach girls sports has dropped dramatically from 90 percent in 1972 to 50 percent in 1987 (Women's Sports Foundation, 1989). These data indicate that the lack of women coaches to serve as role models, counselors and mentors of young girls in sports may be a subtle, but formidable barrier to the entry and continued participation of girls in organized sports.

Nine out of 10 youth sport coaches are males. Only one-half of girls' and women's teams have female coaches.

Low National Priority of Sports Participation

At first glance (see Table 1), the figures on sports participation at the non-school level (38,880,900 participants from a total pool of 48,374,000 = 80 percent) belies the headline that sports participation has a low priority among American youth. A similar interpretation appears likely from a superficial inspection of participation rates for interscholastic sports shown in Table 1 (N = 5,776,820 participants from a possible pool of 14,510,000 = 40 percent). These figures require additional analysis because such a deduction would grossly overestimate the actual sports activity among America's youth. The participation figures are inflated, at face value, because they represent annual participation, whereas most of the sports are seasonal.

Therefore, an athlete who participated in three sports has been counted three times. The second reason for the systematic overestimation of these figures is that the seasonal nature of interscholastic sports dictates that only one-quarter to one-third of the participants are active in school-sponsored sports at any time.

One aspect of the youth sports scene that is obscured by the enrollment figures is the players known as "drop outs." Those who cease their participation before the season ends, for whatever reason, disappear from the statistics on youth sports unless someone makes a concerted attempt to determine why they left their specific team. Such an investigation was conducted by Ewing and Seefeldt (1989), who determined the percent of individuals who had stopped their enrollment in a specific sport during the previous year. The percent of attrition, by sport, as shown in Table 7 reveals that the attrition was well underway at age 10 and reached its peak at ages 14-15. The highest rates of early drop out occurred in gymnastics and the latest rate occurred in football. These data are cross-sectional in nature and reflect only attrition from a single sport per student. Data about the athlete's subsequent sports participation after he/she ceased to participate in the sport of reference were not obtained nor did the investigators learn how many other sports were played by the athletes who "dropped out" of the specific sports.

Fifty percent of sports participants may drop out by the time they reach early adolescence.

Another barrier that has been evident for some time, and is corroborated by these figures, is that the restrictions of team membership and sport offerings per season at the interscholastic level reduce the total number of participants in youth sports by at least 50 percent from their previous involvement at the non-school level. This reduction of sports activity, per capita, is especially apparent in large high schools, where membership in some sports is limited by rules, budget, space and personnel. Thus, smaller schools are likely to have a much higher percent of their student body involved in athletics than the larger schools.

Scrutiny of the events that are associated with enrollments of youth in sports reveals that the organizational structure of sports in the United States—and not a lack of interest on the part of potential enrollees—is primarily responsible for the reduction in participation at age 14 and beyond. Data from several studies reveal that membership on a sports team remains a highly desirable aspiration (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1990; Duda, 1985) throughout the high school years. Paradoxically, the

prestige associated with team membership at the interscholastic level may dissuade those who fail to "make the team" from participating in less prominent activities such as intramural or recreational leagues.

Table 7. Percent of Participants, By Age, Who Indicated that They Will Not Play Next Year, a Sport They Played This Year*

Sport	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Baseball	8.5	12.5	14.9	14.0	13.9	13.8	9.7	6.6	2.7
Basketball	5.0	6.8	11.5	13.8	19.4	18.6	11.5	8.3	3.3
Football	3.3	8.1	9.6	12.1	14.8	17.7	13.4	13.3	5.6
Gymnastics	10.6	17.1	17.1	15.0	13.2	11.9	5.7	3.9	1.7
Softball	6.3	11.1	13.5	12.5	15.8	16.9	10.0	8.2	2.7
Swimming	9.7	14.7	12.8	12.1	14.1	11.3	10.9	8.3	2.5
Tennis	6.0	12.0	11.6	14.6	12.3	16.0	10.5	8.8	5.3
Volleyball	2.9	5.4	10.0	12.6	22.2	18.5	13.4	10.2	2.9
Wrestling	6.2	7.6	9.2	9.7	12.9	17.7	12.9	15.2	6.6
Ice Hockey	2.9	6.7	11.5	19.2	15.4	10.6	15.4	12.2	4.8

Low Socio-Economic Status

The inability of urban cities to sustain Department of Recreation and Youth Services has had a devastating influence on youth sports in America's inner cities (Blitzer et al, 1995; O'Neal, 1993; Rauner et al, 1994; Tyler, 1991). A specific example of the repercussions that are likely to follow when cities fail to support the leisure activities of young citizens is Detroit, Michigan. In Detroit, Michigan less than 10 percent of inner city youth were involved in sports programs in 1993-94 (Seefeldt, 1995). Detroit's resources for recreational services were reduced by 53 percent between 1968 and 1993, although the city lost only 33 percent of its residents during that period

* Source: Ewing, M. & Seefeldt, V. (1989). Participation and Attrition in American Youth Sports. Report to the Sporting Good Manufacturers Association, North Palm Beach, Florida.

(O'Neal, 1993). The combined efforts of not-for-profit providers, such as Boys & Girls Clubs, Police Athletic Leagues, Boys and Girls Scouts, YMCAs and the contributions of numerous religious organizations were insufficient to restore programs and facilities to their former prominence.

The cost of participating in sports may limit involvement in urban communities.

During the last decade recreation departments in urban cities have focused on the treatment of destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, truancy and juvenile crime, often at the expense of providing safe, accessible, secure and supervised programs (Rauner et al., 1994; Tyler, 1991). Clearly, organized sports for children and youth qualify for this latter category of responsibilities to be assumed by public and private agencies. However, the lack of a comprehensive plan for the provision of services for youth often results in struggles for power and competition for funding among agencies (Seefeldt, 1995). As a consequence, resources are scattered and services are restricted to those who are most easily accommodated.

The widely used stratagem of having participants pay for the privilege of playing sports is not effective in most urban areas, nor can residents be expected to provide their own transportation to play fields, courts and pools beyond their own communities. Therefore, schools must play a major role as the safe havens for children's sport and leisure during the non-school hours. Expenditures for maintenance of facilities and salaries for personnel must be allocated, even though these items are the most costly in the public service budget. Leadership that is so readily available for conducting sports programs in the suburbs may be difficult to obtain and retain in urban areas in the absence of a strong in-service program for volunteers.

Fear for Personal Safety

Safe, secure facilities and equipment are fundamental prerequisites for any program of youth sports. Even the most elaborately planned and implemented sports programs will be devoid of participants if parents have the perception that access to facilities poses a danger to their children. Fear for personal safety has been successfully addressed in numerous programs for youth, including Youth Diversion and Gang Prevention in Commerce, California; Gang Prevention and Intervention in Fort Worth, Texas; the Late Night Recreation and Education Program in Kansas City, Missouri (Witt &

Crompton, 1996); and The Good Life Mentoring Project in Miami, Florida (Blitzer et al, 1995).

Safe sports facilities are essential to successful programs.

Three components seem to be essential to removing the elements of fear and intimidation from youth sports programs. The *first component* is to conduct the programs within the local communities, whenever possible. In this situation, public and private schools must play a larger role in providing sports within their boundaries during the non-school hours. The *second component* is the availability of a transportation system that provides safe, efficient and economical passage to and from sports sites. In many instances an adjustment in the transportation system that is in place during regular school hours would solve the problem. The *final component* is a cadre of volunteers who are empowered to provide unobtrusive, but constant, supervision of sites and facilities whenever sports are scheduled. Volunteers who have the primary responsibility of creating a safe and secure environment may be the difference between a successful program and one that is unattended because of fear for personal safety. Neighborhoods must once again establish a sense of community by becoming responsible for all actions that transpire in areas where children and youth congregate for leisure.

Overzealous Promoters

> *There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my game and that's first place. I have finished second twice in my time at Green Bay, and I don't ever want to finish second again. There is a second place bowl game, but it's a bowl game for losers, played by losers. It is and always has been an American zeal to be first in anything we do, and to win and to win and to win.*
>
> Vince Lombardi, Coach of the Green Bay Packers

Although the quote by Vince Lombardi may have been appropriate for the professional athletes that he coached, unfortunately, it was adopted by many coaches at the level of youth sports. The problems of overzealous coaches and parents are so prevalent in youth sports that dozens of books and countless articles have been written to counteract this undue influence. The list of books ranges from teaching coaches and parents how to assess talent

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(Arnot & Gaines, 1986), to teaching pediatricians about youth sports injuries (Micheli, 1984), to information about the epidemiology of sports injuries (Caine, Caine & Lindner 1996). In addition, no fewer than 18 position statements (see Appendix A) have been issued by professional organizations, addressing precautions that should apply to the sports participation of children and youth.

Overzealous coaches and parents have serious effects upon youthful athletes.

The rationale for the increased intensity of training and the extended duration of seasons in youth sports stems from the assumption that optimal performance can only be achieved after prolonged periods of practice. However, the data on burnout (Coakley, 1992; Rowland, 1986; Ward, 1982) and attrition (Burton, 1988; Gould, 1987) support the contention that for almost all of the youthful aspirants, these periods of intensive training have no justifiable physiological, psychological or educational basis (International Federation of Sports Medicine, 1991). Even those who survive these rigorous sessions and go on to Olympic fame may have long-lasting physical and psychological consequences resulting from intensive training (Coakley, 1992; Press, 1992).

There is common agreement that sports programs for children and youth can enhance motoric, physical and social growth. However, when training sessions become so intensive that they result in social isolation, disempowerment and permanent injuries (Coakley, 1992; Press, 1992), then one must question their motives and tactics. Ironically, there are child labor laws in many countries that forbid stereotyped work movements and excessive loading (International Federation of Sports Medicine, 1991; Roberts, 1995), but these same restrictions do not apply to children's sports. Fortunately, the numerous position statements by such organizations as the American Academy of Pediatrics (1981a, 1981b, 1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1988a, 1988b, 1989) and the American College of Sports Medicine (1984, 1988, 1993, 1996) have provided guidance to parents and promoters of sports for children regarding unacceptable practices. Recommendations designed to obtain desirable outcomes accompany the statements of objectionable practice.

Summary and Conclusions

Enrollment figures attest to the commonly-held impression that youth sports are thriving in America. Despite the optimistic reports from program

sponsors of growing interest in specific sports, there are many barriers that preclude maximum participation in youth sports. Children and youth in urban cities and girls in general have had the greatest difficulty gaining access to the quality and variety of programs that are available to boys in general and most children in suburban America.

Identification of barriers is key to beginning to solve the problem of low levels of participation.

Lack of funding to support youth sports programs is a major barrier to maximum participation. Despite a concerted effort by service clubs and not-for-profit agencies, these attempts to fill the gaps left by underfunded municipal programs have resulted in countless underserved youth. Lack of a coordinated master plan that ensures a geographical distribution of services dooms many children in urban cities to independent efforts in local areas where clients are most easily served.

A note of optimism is in order, too. Identification of many of the barriers has directed the attention of school administrators, community leaders and the media to the problems. Numerous efforts to increase fitness, to alleviate sedentary life styles, to eradicate racism and sexism and to expose overzealous parents are underway. The conservative nature of traditional youth sports will require persistence and patience, in conjunction with attempts to change established rules, policies and procedures if what is currently known about youth sports is to be realized on the fields, courts, pools and rinks where young athletes are being educated.

Sports and the Social/Emotional Development of Children and Youth

I know that I am good at jumping because I tried and tried to jump high and then I did.

Anonymous Child

The individual strives to excel at that which he [sic] values and to value that at which he [sic] excels.

Rosenberg, 1979.

Human beings are very social and learning how to respond appropriately in interactions with others is a critical aspect of survival in adulthood. Childhood is a time for learning how to interact successfully with family members, peers and authority figures. Through these interactions children learn the value of sharing, taking turns, expressing appropriate emotions and interpreting other's emotions. Learning to regulate one's own behavior in varying situations, developing friendships, and, depending on the outcomes of these interactions allow children to develop a sense of competence, confidence and self-worth. These social skills are learned early and are often viewed as a sign of readiness for participation on sport teams.

Parents play a critical role in providing information, often nonverbally, to their children during the early years of life. Children begin learning appropriate social interactions very early, typically beginning with learning emotional responses by watching the faces of their mothers during feeding. However, inappropriate social interactions may also occur. In one extreme case of a maladaptive interaction pattern between a mother and her child, a psychopathological condition may have resulted. Massie (1982) described a child who was diagnosed as autistic at one year of age. At four months of age the child's interaction with her mother was characterized by the mother turning away from attempts by the child to engage in smiling face-to-face interactions. The child would then turn away and cease smiling, and the reactions of the child became more disphoric as time went on. Massie argued

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that, although it is not possible to rule out biological characteristics of the child, the results suggest that in some cases lack of maternal responsiveness may indeed lead to psychopathology. On a more positive note, Klinnert, Campos, Sorce, Emde and Svedja (1983) reported that infants crawling across a visual cliff apparatus tended to look to their mother for information on whether it was safe or not. If the mother's face exhibited fear, infants did not attempt to crawl across the apparent cliff, but if a mother showed a happy face, the infants were very likely to crawl across the cliff. Parental responses to children's attempts to learn new skills are critical if children are to feel empowered to try new and challenging tasks, including movement and sport skills.

The development of social roles and appropriate social behaviors occurs during the childhood years, with physical play between parent-child and child-child serving as a strong regulator in the development process. Physical play between parents and children includes activities such as tickling, wrestling, and chasing young children and is typically carried out by the father (Lamb, 1977a, 1977b; MacDonald & Parke, 1984; Power & Parke, 1983). Gender differences in physical play with parents have been noted. MacDonald and Parke (1986) found that physical play peaked in early childhood and gradually declined with age, especially for girls; however, physical play remained at significant levels even between adolescents and their parents.

Associations between the amount of physical play between parents and their preschool children and the social competence of children with their peers have been reported. MacDonald and Parke (1984) found that children who engaged in more physical play with their parents and exhibited more positive affect during these play sessions were more popular with their peers. MacDonald (1987) found that sociometrically popular children engaged in significantly more physical play than did rejected children, and both of these groups (i.e., popular and rejected children) engaged in more physical play than did neglected children. The largest difference was between the neglected children and the other two groups.

Physical play is central to the development of social competence.

MacDonald (1988) stated that engaging in physical play with a sensitive, responsive adult or peer may result in greater ability in the regulation of affect. The regulation of emotions is a fundamental social skill and is often associated with parent-child interactions and possibly peer

interactions. Physical play provides an arena in which the child could be made more aware of his or her emotionality and encouraged to monitor and self-regulate his or her level of arousal so that over-excitement and other inappropriate emotional responses do not occur. Through the self-regulation process and the development of physical and problem-solving skills, physical play is central to the development of social competence.

As children near adolescence, their physical play becomes more aggressive, exhibited by more rough-and tumble play, and may involve hostility and aggression (Neill, 1976). Pellegrini (1987) stated that rough-and-tumble play may function to teach children to differentiate between aggressive and playful episodes. In essence, children learn how far they can go in play-fighting without provoking an angry or aggressive response in another child. At home, fathers are often heard telling their children how far they can go without causing pain. MacDonald (1988) countered that physical play which leads to aggression and which is characterized by relative inability to regulate one's affect is expected to be aversive to other children. The evidence is that rejected and hyperactive children are prone to having these deficits.

There are several factors which seem to influence the parents' willingness or ability to engage in physical play with their children. MacDonald and Parke (1986) found that the older the parents the less willing they are to participate in physical play, even after controlling for the age of the child. Indeed, the lowered levels of physical play, as age advances, are congruent with data suggesting that parenting styles become less sex-specific as parents grow older. In addition to age of the parent, the amount of leisure time, economic stress on the family and the type of job may alter the amount of time that parents spend in physical play with their children. The association between play and aggressive behavior may have implications for parents of youth in inner city or areas of high unemployment. Can sport play a role in teaching children limits in aggression and how to self-regulate one's behavior toward others and how to derive pleasure appropriately from interactions with others?

Potential for Social Development Through Sport

Sport can be an excellent training ground for social development. Children involved in sport can learn the necessary social and moral skills

needed to function effectively in adult life. Sport provides many unique situations for discussions of appropriate behavior. Learning social and moral skills results when adult coaches teach the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. In addition, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence result when children are taught to feel good about their abilities and the improvement they make in their performance.

Participation in sport alone does not result in the development of positive social and emotional characteristics. The positive development of youth in organized sports can only be derived through sport experiences which foster positive experiences and minimize negative experiences. *The use of the terms positive and negative sport experiences does not refer to "winning" and "losing." Whether a child has a positive or negative sport experience is dependent on the coach's ability to use positive reinforcement, to match the challenges of the sport tasks to the abilities of the children and youth, and to teach children to respect and abide by the rules. Creating a positive environment will allow children to develop positive social and emotional characteristics.*

Sports, Self-Esteem, Self-Confidence and Self-Competence

Evaluation of one's self continues to be a primary focus in both educational and sport contexts because it is thought to be a major factor influencing such processes as motivation, persistence, standards of success and causal attributions for success and failure (Weiss, 1987). Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself (sic): It expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other expressive behavior" (p. 5).

How do experiences in sport influence the self-evaluations made by youth that result in either enhanced or diminished assessments of self-esteem? Two sources of self-esteem development are *reflected appraisals* and *social comparisons*. Cooley (1956) described the role of significant others in the development of the self as a social mirror, one that the child uses to imagine what others think of his or her appearance, motives and behaviors. Children

actively formulate their own sense of self-worth by associating a self-evaluation with the judgment they think others ascribe to their behavior. Several examples of social comparison which may occur within a sport team include: the reactions of teammates to a child's error, the fact that everyone else can do a skill when one child cannot, and, exclusion from favored positions. Weiss (1987) proposed that reflected appraisals refer to those direct and indirect communications from significant others regarding approval or disapproval of the child's behaviors and performances. Thus, coaches, parents and peers provide information in the form of feedback which will influence a child's self-assessment.

Coaches, parents and peers provide feedback which influences the young athletes' self-assessment.

The impact of a coach's feedback on the development of self-esteem of youth was described in a classic study by Smith, Smoll and Curtis (1979). Male baseball players whose coaches had been trained to use a "positive approach" to coaching, i.e., more frequent encouragement, positive reinforcement and corrective feedback, had significantly higher self-esteem ratings over the course of a season than children whose coaches used these techniques less frequently. The most compelling evidence was found for those children who started the season with the lowest self-esteem ratings. In addition to evaluating themselves more positively, children with low self-esteem evaluated their coaches more positively than did children with higher self-esteem who played for coaches who used the "positive approach." In a follow-up study, Barnett, Smoll and Smith (1992) reported identical findings, plus, one year later, 95 percent of the youth who played for coaches who had been trained to use the positive approach signed up to play baseball compared with 75 percent of the youth who played baseball again with untrained volunteer adult coaches.

The importance of an enhanced self-esteem on future participation can not be overlooked. However, the relationship of self-esteem to continued involvement in sport (and education) is more complex. As children receive more instruction, their physical skills should improve. As physical skills in a sport improve children will experience more success and greater affect (i.e., pride and joy). Several theorists (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967; Epstein, 1973; Harter, 1983) have proposed the notion that self-esteem is multidimensional. Harter (1983) proposed four dimensions underlying one's global self-esteem: (a) competence, or success in meeting achievement demands; (b) social acceptance, or attention, worthiness and positive reinforcement received from

significant others; (c) control, or feelings of internal responsibility for outcomes; and (d) virtue, or adherence to moral and ethical standards. Harter (1981) further proposed that affect is central in formulations of self-esteem.

The pride and joy or shame and disappointment that accompany perceptions of competence or incompetence are thought to influence motivated behavior. The associated affect which accompanies either successful or unsuccessful performance is best understood by looking at the attributions that youth make about their performance. For example, Diener and Dweck (1978) found that children who attributed mistakes in completing soma puzzles to lack of ability expressed negative affect toward the task and no longer wanted to participate.

Children need to be taught that mistakes do not equal failure.

Children should be taught that a mistake is not synonymous with failure. Rather a mistake means that new strategies, more practice, or greater effort are needed to succeed at the task. What is often required when children perceive a mistake as a failure is for an adult to intervene and help children see other options, rather than to conclude that they lack ability at the task.

Because children often use social comparison as a way of determining their ability at a task, the highly visible arena of youth sports provides children with many opportunities to determine their ability when compared with others on their teams. Unfortunately, given the influence of other factors such as maturation and previous knowledge of the sport on one's ability to perform a sport skill, children often reach incorrect conclusions about their abilities. Thus, the role of parents and coaches becomes even more significant in the understanding of how to overcome a mistake.

Horn and her colleagues (Horn & Hasbrook, 1986, 1987; Horn & Weiss, 1991) suggested that the sources of information that children and adolescents use to estimate their physical competence vary developmentally. Specifically, younger children (ages 8 and 9) tended to rely upon game outcome, parental feedback and evaluation as primary informational sources. Older children (ages 10 to 14) depended more heavily on social comparison to peers as well as evaluation by peers as sources of information about one's competence. Horn and Weiss (1991) found that children became more accurate about their physical competence with age: children 10 to 14 years of age were significantly more accurate about physical competencies than 8- to 9-year old children. Horn and Weiss stated that these age differences were related, in part, to the sources of information children use to evaluate ability.

Younger children preferred feedback and evaluation from teachers and parents, whereas older children were more likely to use peer-comparison and self-evaluation. These data suggest that early involvement of parents and adult coaches is critical in the development of more accurate assessments of competence for youth who are learning sport skills. Without adults helping youth to differentiate the issues of effort and ability, children may decide too quickly that they are not good or competent at a sport and thus lose interest in continuing to work at developing their skills.

Coaches' feedback is essential to young athletes learning to correctly assess their ability.

The importance of feedback from adults is tempered by children's self-perception of ability and whether children perceive that they have control over the event and its outcome. Horn and Hasbrook (1987) found that for 10- to 14-year old children, preference for external sources of information such as parental feedback and evaluation, was higher in children who were lower in perceived physical ability and higher in external locus of control. Conversely, children high in perceived competence and internal locus of control were more likely to identify internal sources of criteria to judge competence, such as degree of improvement in skills, ease in learning new skills and amount of effort exerted. Again, adult intervention and feedback is necessary and critical to preclude some children from making erroneous conclusions about their ability.

The influence of coaches' feedback is critical to the development of children's self-esteem and perceived competence. Horn (1985) examined the influence of coaching behaviors on the self-esteem and perceived competence of female junior high school softball players ranging in age from 13 to 15 years. Coaches' patterns of verbal and non-verbal reinforcement were observed in both practice and competitive settings across an entire season. Although Horn reported that skill development was the primary contributor to positive changes in self-perceptions of ability, certain coaching behaviors also significantly influenced perceptions of self-esteem during practice situations, only. Specifically, players who received more frequent positive reinforcement or no reinforcement in response to desirable performances scored lower in perceived physical competence and players who received more criticism in response to performance errors had higher perceptions of competence. Although these results appear contradictory to common-sense interpretations of the roles of positive and negative reinforcement, Horn

attributed these findings to their contingency and appropriateness to player behavior.

The quality and contingency of feedback is crucial to young athletes.

Horn (1985) reported that the positive reinforcement statements given by coaches were often unconditional to players' skill behaviors. That is, many of the positive reinforcement statements were not responses to desirable skill techniques and behaviors, but rather were more general (e.g., "good job, Sally" rather than "good job, Sally, on using two hands to catch the ball"). The coaches' use of criticism, however, was often associated with a direct response to an error in skill and usually contained skill-relevant information on how to improve (e.g., "That's not the way to hit a ball, Jill! Put both hands together and keep your elbows away from your body"). Thus, the quality of coaches' feedback, its contingency upon athletes' behavior, and the appropriateness of the information given, rather than the quantity of the feedback and the mere use of positive statements, are crucial to children's cognitions about the meaning of these messages. While the role of coaches in developing perceptions of ability and enhanced self-worth is suggested by the results of the research of Horn and Smith, Smoll and Curtis, the role that parents play and how their expectations and beliefs about a child's ability in sport affect self-worth are unclear at this time.

However, within the academic arena, a significant amount of research has investigated the relationship between parental expectancies and beliefs about a child's ability and the child's perceptions of their academic abilities. Parsons, Adler and Kaczala (1982) found a significant relationship between parental expectancies and beliefs about a child's academic ability and the child's own beliefs and attitudes. Harter (1988) reported that children's perceptions of social support by parents and classmates were strongly predictive of self-worth, which in turn significantly predicted affect and motivation.

The expectancies of parents and their feedback to children following either success or failure is critical to the development of young children. Eccles and her colleagues (1983, 1991) reported that children's motivation-related cognitions (e.g., perceived competence, value of involvement) were shaped through interactions with parents. Specifically, parents are presumed to influence children's judgments by communicating their own beliefs about the child's likelihood of success and the relative value of the various achievement areas. Researchers in the academic (Parsons et al., 1982;

Phillips, 1987) and physical (Brustad, 1993; Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992) domains have found that children's perceptions are linked to their motivation, expectancies of success and achievement levels.

Boys perceived themselves as more competent in sports and felt that doing well was important to their parents.

Gender differences do exist, however, in children's expectancies of success in various achievement areas and in what children view as accepted areas of achievement. Eccles and Harold (1991) found that children's characteristics of self-perception and parental socialization influences explained gender differences in children's sport involvement. Boys had higher perceived sport competence than girls did and were more likely to report that participating in and doing well at sports was important to their parents. In addition, an important mediating variable affecting children's involvement choices pertains to individual differences in the perceived value of sport.

Parents walk a fine line between support which promotes feelings of competence and support which is perceived as pressure by children. Children's perceptions of "parental pressure" to participate and succeed in sport have been consistently linked to negative affective experiences in sport. Passer (1983) found that children high in competitive trait anxiety were characterized by the tendency to worry more about incurring negative evaluations from others. Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1984) noted that young wrestlers who perceived high levels of parental pressure to wrestle were likely to have high state anxiety regarding wrestling competition. On the more positive side, Scanlan and Lewthwaite reported that greater season-long enjoyment was related to high levels of parental satisfaction with performance, positive adult involvement and interactions and low frequency of negative maternal interactions. Brustad (1988) observed that greater season-long enjoyment in youth basketball players was related to a lower perception of parental pressure to participate for both boys and girls. Finally, Lewthwaite and Scanlan (1989) reported that elite young wrestlers who worried frequently about adult expectations perceived high levels of parental pressure to wrestle. Clearly, parental behaviors exert considerable influence upon the nature of children's affective experiences in sport.

Parental behaviors influence how children feel about their sports experiences.

Coaches and parents must be careful in their use of feedback because it can undermine self-esteem and perceptions of ability. Youth sport coaches who are uncertain about how to change the behavior of their athletes, who are impatient with youth who are learning skills, or who are cynical may use negative feedback to challenge the youth to change behavior more rapidly than youth can achieve. Weiss (1991) described her work with girls ages 7 to 12 years in a gymnastics academy who were being tested for body fat, among other variables. While taking the measurements with skinfold calipers, several girls mentioned that they were fat or seemed embarrassed even though the administrators of the test had difficulty obtaining a sufficient skinfold to complete the caliper reading. When asked how and why they thought they were fat, a common response was usually the result of a common derogatory remark such as, "The coach calls me thunder thighs." Issues related to weight are extremely sensitive and must be handled with care and understanding. Most youth involved in skating, swimming, wrestling and gymnastics have heard about being too fat. Youth with potential of success may be told that if they lost 10 pounds they could be like the champion in their age group. This feedback is often given with no scientific knowledge of percent body fat or of the psychological damage that such a comment can have on a child.

In a recent book entitled Little Girls in Pretty Boxes, Joan Ryan (1995) described many instances of negative or unsubstantiated feedback from coaches and officials which resulted in negative experiences for young female gymnasts. The issue of weight came up often. For example, Christy Henrich who at age 15 stood 4 feet 11 inches and weighed 90 pounds was told by a judge that she would never make the Olympic team if she didn't lose weight. This information became a slogan burned into Christy's brain and she basically stopped eating and 6 years later she died of multiple organ failure and weighed less than 60 pounds. Virtually every Olympic gymnast has heard the same message and many are still fighting the negative view of themselves that was instilled in them from being called names such as "pregnant spider," "tank," "pumpkin," or "butterball" by their coach. Many of the former Olympic gymnasts are fighting eating disorders today.

Issues of body weight must be addressed cautiously by coaches.

In addition to eating disorders, these elite youth gymnasts have learned to accept negative and, at times, vicious comments from their coaches without expression or comment. Coaches can rant and rave about every

minute error and gymnasts must never say a word. They must be in complete control of their emotions and respond like robots rather than human beings (Ryan, 1995). Hearing nothing but very negative comments leads persons to doubt themselves and their extraordinary ability. In such negative environments many elite performers believe that they will never be good enough to achieve the goals they seek. Feedback can be destructive and therefore must be used wisely.

While parents are a major source of influence in determining one's perception of competence and in determining which achievement areas are most salient, their influence diminishes as children reach adolescence. During adolescence, a child's peers, including close friends, classmates and teammates, become more important than parents in determining the child's perception of self and interpersonal competence. Unfortunately, little research has been done on the influence of peers in a sport setting on the development of perceived competencies and self-esteem.

In adolescence, competence in sports is related to peer acceptance.

Within the sport domain, recent studies have reported a significant relationship between physical competence, interpersonal skills and peer acceptance (Evans & Roberts, 1987; Weiss & Duncan, 1992). Weiss and Duncan found a strong relationship between physical competence and peer acceptance. Specifically, boys and girls who believed they were physically competent were actually competent as rated by their teachers. Those who believed that they were physically competent were also those who perceived themselves to be accepted by their peers, were interpersonally competent as rated by their teachers and expected to be successful in future interpersonal situations.

Implications for Social/Emotional Development Through Sport

The sport environment provides a fertile environment for fostering the social and emotional development of children. Many parents serve as volunteer coaches during the formative years of social and emotional development. In addition, sport provides a myriad of experiences for children to experience emotional change and to have guidance from adults in understanding acceptable responses to both positive and negative experiences. Unfortunately, most volunteer coaches and parents have received little, if any, training in how emotions are learned or managed.

Parents and coaches both need to better understand how their actions affect young athletes.

If children are to derive the potential benefits from their sport experience, more must be done to help the parents teach both social and emotional skills. Educating parents and coaches about children's perceptions of instructional feedback and reinforcement and providing strategies for bringing about change in self-perceptions of ability and self-worth, motivation, sportsmanship and anxiety is one of the ways to maximize the social and emotional development of children.

Coaches must be educated to provide appropriate and contingent feedback in response to performance successes and errors (Weiss, 1991). This means that coaches must provide encouragement, plus information on how to improve after the incorrect execution of skills and how to provide praise plus corrective information following successful execution of a task (Black & Weiss, 1992; Horn, 1985; Smoll & Smith, 1989). Children want to be assured by their coaches that setting higher goals by the young athlete will lead to improved performance. In contrast, excessive praise for a task easily achieved or for a skill that the entire group can do may convey negative information about a child's competence. Likewise, constant criticism, despite the amount of information conveyed in the message, can erode children's confidence and motivation to continue participation.

If children are to experience an increase in their perception of competence during the learning of skills, coaches must provide a carefully constructed progression of learning skills. In addition, modifications to equipment and rules should be made to provide an optimal challenge or a match between the task or skill difficulty and the capabilities of the child. The appropriate use of feedback and praise can lead to a confident child who is willing to try new skills and who views an error as a new challenge.

Because sport is so highly valued in the American culture, many parents believe that children should be exposed to organized sport at an early age. Reports indicate that involvement in organized sports competition can begin as early as age 3 in the United States (Martens, 1986). The question that must be addressed concerns when children are ready to begin competing in sports. Seefeldt (1988) described readiness as the level of maturation or experience needed for learning or some other benefit to be realized. Psychological readiness for competition occurs when children have the desire to compare skills with others and thereby acquire information about themselves, which is a primary attraction of sport participation for youngsters

(Passer, 1988; Roberts, 1980). A second aspect of psychological readiness occurs when a child reaches a level of cognitive maturity that allows her or him to understand the competitive process (Passer, 1988). Understanding the competitive process entails an appreciation of the social nature of competition, particularly with regard to the cooperative and strategic aspects of sport and an awareness of the nature of individual roles within a cooperating group (Brustad, 1993). Coakley (1986) stated that children are generally attracted by the excitement of sport before they have developed a mature conception of sport.

Children may not have all the psychological skills needed for competitive sports until the age of 11 or 12.

With respect to the readiness to compare skills with others, Veroff (1969) suggested that children do not generally begin to actively compare their abilities with others until they are at least 5 or 6 years old. However, until the age of 8 or 9, children lack the cognitive ability to use information about an experience to make sophisticated comparisons. Until the age of 8 or 9, children tend to rely on objective outcomes, such as winning or losing, and upon adult feedback to provide them with information about personal ability in sport (Horn & Hasbrook, 1986, 1987; Horn & Weiss, 1991). Research also indicates that prior to adolescence there is only a very weak correlation between children's perceptions of competence and their actual competence as assessed by teachers or coaches (Horn & Weiss, 1991; Nicholls, 1978; Weiss & Horn, 1990).

One of the cognitive distinctions that a child must be able to make is the differentiation between the concepts of ability, effort and task difficulty (Duda, 1987; Nicholls, 1978). Nicholls (1978) found that until the age of 11 or 12 youth were not able to differentiate these concepts with respect to solving math problems. Prior to age 11, children (ages 7-9) are likely to regard effort as ability and, therefore, effort is the cause of all achievement outcomes. Between ages 9 and 11 children only partially differentiate the roles of ability and effort in performance outcomes.

Psychological readiness also involves the mature conception of the social nature of competition. Coakley (1986) argued that children cannot fully benefit from competitive situations until they have the capacity to understand their roles in relation to the roles of others within this context. Selman (1971, 1976) suggested that it is not until the age of 8 to 10 years that children develop the necessary role-taking abilities to allow them to understand another person's point of view. This ability to understand

another's point of view is necessary for one to cooperate effectively with others.

Premature sport involvement may result in undesirable emotional consequences for children. The limited capacity of children to develop accurate conceptions of ability may result in inappropriate aspirations and achievement goals (Passer, 1988). When expectations for performance are too high, children are likely to experience frustration, discouragement and low self-esteem (Brustad, 1993). Roberts (1980) contended that children are not able to develop realistic achievement goals until they can make appropriate attributions for outcomes. A mature attributional capacity will not be present until children can differentiate between ability, task difficulty and effort in influencing performance.

During the time when children are undergoing cognitive development and understanding of abstract concepts, adults must step in and help them interpret the outcomes and events of a game. If adults do not convey ability-related information in a sensitive and encouraging way, children may interpret this feedback as an indication of low ability (Roberts, 1980). The limited amount of research conducted on the relationship between coaches' feedback and children's self-perceptions indicates that coaches have considerable influence on young athletes' self-esteem (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979; Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983) and perceptions of ability (Horn, 1985).

Coakley (1986) stated that children should not begin competing before the age of 8 but that "it is never too early to engage in expressive physical activities" (p. 59). As an expressive physical activity, youth sports should be structured so that they meet developmentally appropriate outcomes for the children involved. By focusing upon skill development goals during childhood rather than emphasizing competitive strategies, children will be more likely to attain the positive psychological, social and emotional outcomes that they deserve through their involvement in sport (Brustad, 1993).

Summary and Conclusions

The role of parents and coaches is critical to the development of perceptions of competence, self-confidence and high self-esteem. Early play experiences with parents teach children both physical control and skill as well

as social competence. Parents must be aware that they must provide the same experiences for their daughters that they do for their sons. Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence can result when children are taught to feel good about their individual abilities and improvements they make in their performance. Positive approaches to coaching are critical to youth developing their sport skills. Gender differences have been found in the type of feedback given by coaches, with girls and those less skilled receiving more general feedback or little feedback compared to boys or to those of higher skill levels. Age differences exist in the valuing of feedback from coaches, parents and peers. Coaches must be aware that their negative or unsubstantiated feedback can create very negative experiences for youth, such as negative self-image and eating disorders.

Promoting Moral Development Through Youth Sports

Despite the problems associated with competitive sport, sport is replete with opportunities to encounter, learn, transform and enact moral values.

David Shields and Brenda Bredemeier

In Character Development and Physical Activity, (p.3).

Observers of the sporting scene have suggested that sport is one of the main arenas for developing the total person. Philosophically, Plato proposed that there is a close correspondence between physical and moral fitness (cited in Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Piaget (1923) proposed that the physical play of children is the foundation for each child's cognitive advancement, ranging from quantum physics to interpersonal morality. How participation in physical play or sport facilitates or undermines the moral development of youth is the focus of this section.

Morality in the Context of Sport

When addressing the concept of morality in sport, it is important to begin with an understanding of the moral domain. Blasi (1987) proposed a framework for defining the moral domain by suggesting that a behavior or practice can be considered moral "if it is intentional, a response to some sense of obligation, and if the obligation is a response to an ideal, even if vaguely understood" (1987, p. 86). Thus, for a moral act to occur it must be intentional. One must have thought about the outcome of the action. In addition, Blasi stated that a moral behavior contains a sense of obligation or a sense of necessity. Each action is accompanied by the belief that an action is the "moral thing to do." Finally, Blasi's framework provides a sense of prescription that evolves from a clearly prescribed ideal or conception of the good and right relationships among people.

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Blasi's (1987, 1990) description of the moral domain fits well in the context of sport. Many actions in sport, such as helping an opponent up after a hard fall, retrieving a ball for an official, or brushing a batter back from the plate by throwing a pitch at the batter's head, are intentional. Some of these behaviors may even reflect a sense of obligation. Some of these behaviors may even be prescriptive in that the athlete was taught the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in various situations.

Moral concepts of fairness support the very existence of the notion of sport.

Sport provides a serious domain for the expression of moral practice or behavior. Specifically, Shields and Bredemeier (1995) proposed that sport provides an arena for moral practice because (1) participants may be described as serious about their desire to strive hard, seek victory and avoid being "cheated;" (2) participants and observers employ moral categories to evaluate sport behaviors (e.g., sportsmanship); and (3) moral concepts of fairness support the very existence of the notion of sport, i.e., sport is chosen freely by participants and is designed as a "fair" contest. Some refer to sport as one of the last achievement arenas that is played on a level playing field.

Three terms are often associated with any discussion of morality in the sport domain: fair play, sportsmanship and character. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) proposed that in addition to fair play and sportsmanship, character consists of integrity and compassion. Thus, these two terms will be added to our discussion of moral behavior in the sport domain. Although other terms or concepts may be associated with sport and may be commonly associated with the moral domain, they will not be treated in this discussion.

Fair Play Competition is the basis for all sport contests. Competition is frequently viewed as a negative aspect of sport whereby individuals are taught to do whatever it takes to defeat the opponent. Orlick (1978) proposed that sport activities should be designed to facilitate cooperation rather than competition if individuals were to learn about fair play. While many view competition and cooperation as opposites, competition should be viewed as a special form of cooperation. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) proposed that in a game or contest, two or more competitors cooperate by providing the other with a worthy challenge that permits each contestant to exhibit her or his best performance. Further, the determination of a "winner" requires that all contestants cooperate in upholding the conditions of fairness. They concluded that fair play requires

that all competitors understand and abide by the formal rules of the game as well as the spirit of cooperation that is needed to ensure a fair contest.

Fair play is not an innate characteristic of youth sport participants. The development of the concept of fair play for youth in sport begins with the adults who organize and conduct the sport experience. Certainly coaches and officials are integral to the child's understanding of, and appreciation for, the rules of the game. Parents also play an integral role in teaching and reinforcing the concepts of fair play. Parents, coaches and officials are also likely to undermine the learning of the concept of fair play if they are not consistent in their teaching and in their personal conduct.

Parents, coaches and officials will undermine the learning of the concept of fair play if they are not consistent in their teaching and personal conduct.

Most coaches and parents espouse the virtue of fair play until they perceive that the opponent is winning unfairly, e.g., not playing all the players on one's team when the rules require that all players play a certain portion of the game or contest or never taking out their best players. Parents may even chastise the coach who abides by the rules and does not win, which sends a mixed message about the importance of fair play. Journalists and broadcasters have fallen into the same trap of believing that the only worthy performance was that given by the winning team regardless of whether they abided by the rules or not. For example, broadcasters laud the cleverness of a team who is able to confuse the official and send a better free throw shooter to the line instead of having the person who was fouled shoot the awarded free throw.

Sport organizations have a responsibility to assure that participants have a fair set of rules to govern their competition. For example, youth football programs may exclude youth who are of a certain age but exceed the weight limit for the age group. This is done to ensure a safer environment for those who are participating. If fair play is to be learned, it is the responsibility of all those associated with the sport experience to help athletes learn and appreciate the concept of fair play.

Sportsmanship Keating (1964) defined sportsmanship as behavior becoming of a sports person. Although relatively straightforward, Keating's concept is far from simplistic. Keating maintained that sportsmanship is oriented toward maximizing the enjoyable experience of all participants and that sportsmanship could not be a part of athletics where the primary goal is to win the game. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) contended that it is precisely when competition is heated and winning matters that the concept of

sportsmanship is most relevant. Shields and Bredemeier stated that "sportsmanship involves an intense striving to succeed, tempered by commitment to a 'play spirit,' such that ethical standards will take precedence over strategic gain when the two conflict. Thus, sportsmanship involves two complements: maintaining allegiance to one's moral vision in the face of attractive competing values and maintaining a fruitful tension between seriousness and non-seriousness, between work and play, between critique and affirmation" (p. 194).

Sportsmanship involves an intense striving to succeed tempered by commitment to a 'play spirit.'

Similar to the concept of fair play, sportsmanship must be taught to youth participants. Coaches and parents must be quick to reinforce behaviors of youth who have made the right choice between the acceptable and unacceptable ways to achieve success. This reinforcement is necessary to counteract the more prevalent view of gang members or other deviant groups who believe that you "get all you can get, while the getting is good and before someone else gets it."

The concept of sportsmanship transcends the world of sport to the world of business and beyond. Kroll (1975) wrote that the "moral equivalents of sportsmanship are extrapolated beyond the boundaries of sport per se" (p.1). Such sport-related phrases as "cheap shot" and "hitting below the belt" are sprinkled throughout everyday conversation. Participation in sport can teach and reinforce the concept of sportsmanship to youth more readily than almost any alternative activity or arena.

Integrity and Compassion (Character) The development of character has often been associated with the positive aspects of participation in sport. Those who espouse that sport builds "good" character believe that through sport one learns to overcome obstacles, cooperate with teammates, persist in the face of defeat, develop self-control and learn to live graciously with victory and defeat. While these characteristics are valued within our culture, Arnold (1984) proposed that moral character is developed in sport through the learning of loyalty and courage and that these qualities are practiced in an arena that is committed to upholding what is fair and just and in the interests of all. Maraj (cited in Arnold, 1984) stated that sport is a particularly valuable arena for the development of character because " there are not many situations in everyday life which provide either the kind of opportunities or the number of them evoking the qualities which are considered desirable" (p. 279).

The idea that sport develops character is not without its critiques. Opponents fall into three camps: (1) morally neutral, (2) those who believe that development occurs in sport but does not transcend the sport arena and (3) those who contend that sport develops "characters" not character. Kohn (1986) stated that competition itself promotes antisocial behavior. Orlick (1978, 1990) proposed that an overemphasis on competition and the outcome of winning generates moral problems. Others have argued that sport reflects the negative values present in the broader culture (Sage, 1988), or that the special status or treatment given to athletes retards their development (Coakley, 1990).

The reality is that sport does all of the above. Whether sport facilitates the development of positive character or negative character depends on the experiences of the athlete. The responsibility again rests squarely on the shoulders of coaches, parents and organizations to provide positive experiences which promote the development of positive character.

Interpreting the Various Models of Moral Development

To understand the development of moral behavior or reasoning, it is important to understand the theories that have evolved to explain how children acquire an understanding of right and wrong behavior. If one gains an understanding of how moral development is acquired, it is then possible to examine these understandings within a specific context such as sport. In this way we can learn how children's participation in sport may either enhance or undermine their moral development.

Many researchers have addressed the issue of how to explain the development of moral reasoning in children. For example, Hartshorne and May investigated the notion that morality was a general character trait. From 1928 to 1930, Hartshorne and May published three books (1928, 1929a, 1929b) addressing their research findings. They believed that moral people were honest, fair and helpful. Their research led to the conclusion that while children know what is right, they do not always behave the same way. This inconsistency in knowing what is right while not exhibiting the right behaviors was perplexing. The notion of investigating a person's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to understand moral virtues remains intuitively appealing. In general, it was concluded that moral behavior was situationally determined. However, subsequent researchers (e.g., Turiel, 1976) have

acknowledged that both methodological flaws in their research and the understanding that mitigating circumstances call for more qualified and complex moral judgments resulted in the inconsistent findings reported by Hartshorne and May.

Piaget (1932/1965) provided one of the most ingenious views of the development of children, plus a methodology which has endured to the present time. Piaget wanted to understand children's cognitive development from the point of view of the child, rather than an adult's interpretation of the child's experience. He found that children's thinking can be distinguished from the thinking of adults by the quantity of knowledge that is possessed, as well as the way that children organize information. Piaget applied this same approach to understanding cognitive development to understanding children's moral development. Based on his discussion with youth ranging in age from 5 to 13, he concluded that children passed through stages of moral understanding. The first stage, *heteronomous morality,* is reflective of the direct experiences each child has had. Thus, young children understand that rules are unalterable and the result of adult authority. If one breaks a moral rule, children believe that something bad will happen—a belief that Piaget labeled *imminent justice.* The second stage was labeled *autonomous morality* (a morality of cooperation) and results from the child's developing the understanding that multiple perspectives can exist to explain a phenomenon. In addition, peers become important to children and cooperative relationships are important in the understanding of social norms. Thus, children see rules as resulting from consensus, as evolving from cooperative activity, and as having a history of change and development.

While making a significant contribution to the understanding of moral development in children, Piaget's work has received substantial criticism. The issue of children's understanding of rule flexibility is one concept that has been challenged by Epstein (1965; cited in Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Epstein reported that children believe that changing rules of an activity over which they have control is permissible, but rules established by persons with greater authority in a hierarchy are unchangeable by the person with lesser power. A second criticism has challenged the idea of stages of understanding, which Piaget suggested were overlapping within a child. Likona (1976) stated that there has been little support for this hypothesis.

Within the sport context, there is intuitive appeal for the idea that children have different understandings of right and wrong than adults. When children are observed forming their own games, they use a cooperative approach to determine the rules and to maintain some sense of fairness. This approach can be observed from how children select teams to how children handicap players with greater ability or who are advantaged in some way (e.g., height or weight). However, when adults join the game, it is inconceivable to them that the "real" rules or adult rules of the game would not be adhered to. For example, instead of using a soccer ball or basketball that is smaller and better suited to the youth participants, adults will often insist that the "real" ball be used and that the "baby" ball be discarded. Sport organizations may also adopt this adult view of the rules that are used to govern the competition. For example, a rule derived from consensus of the players that is often used in sandlot baseball is to call a baserunner out if she/he is hit with a thrown ball while in the base paths. The participants in the game were quickly taught that you did not throw the ball as hard as you could or you were ostracized by your peers. The concept of throwing at the runner allowed the young participant a chance to "get an out," because most were unable to throw the required distances between bases. Most sport organizations would not allow such a practice, even with softer balls, because of the liability associated with potential injury and the fact that it is not the game as played by adults. Thus, rather than allowing children the opportunity to develop moral understandings through their interactions with peers, moral understandings are taught by adults through the rules of the game. Unfortunately, many adults see rules as "gray" and will teach children every possible way to take advantage of the rules.

Children have different understandings of right and wrong than adults.

Social Learning Theory Social learning theory represents a category of theories that emphasize different learning principles and outcomes. Most social learning theorists are concerned more with observable behavior, rather than traits or cognitive or moral reasoning. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) suggested that social learning theorists view people as pliable and, thus, would not accept the notion that moral development is age-related or occurs in stages. In addition, Shields and Bredemeier proposed that social learning theorists operate from the notion that all behavior is learned and that morality is socially defined and culturally relative.

Many methods have been shown to result in changes of behavior or learning "correct" behavior. The first method *classical conditioning* has not been used in the study of sport behaviors. The second method proposed for shaping behavior is *reinforcement contingencies.* The basic tenet of this method is that positively reinforced behavior is likely to be repeated, whereas behavior that meets with continual punishment is likely to decrease. Between continual reinforcement and continual punishment is a wide array of reinforcement schedules, each with its own consequence for subsequent behavior. Bandura (1969, 1977) stated that intermittent reinforcement is the most powerful schedule for maintaining behavior.

Desired behaviors can be shaped in youth through reinforcement contingencies and modeling.

The third method used in social learning theory is *modeling.* Children who observe someone act in a pro-social way are more likely to act pro-socially themselves, particularly if the model is similar to themselves, is a person of status, or has her or his behavior rewarded (Rushton, 1982). Modeling is equally effective in teaching antisocial behaviors. The final method, which is perhaps more debatable among social learning researchers, recognizes the role of cognitive processes in directing behavior. Spielberger and DeNike (1966) suggested that when people are informed about why they receive reinforcements, the reinforcements are much more potent.

Bandura (1986, 1991) has posited that moral cognitions play a vital role in moral behavior. Moral judgments involve two separate processes: One must select from a multitude of situational cues the relevant moral elements, and then, prioritize the selected elements by applying moral rules. With increasing experience and cognitive competence, one's moral reasoning evolves from simple rules to highly complex ones. Bandura explained that parents universally use external and physically-oriented restraints on toddlers, but as children mature parents increasingly offer explanations in their discipline. The relationship between moral cognitions and action is mediated by self-regulatory mechanisms, which function in combination with social sanctions to inhibit deviant behavior and promote pro-social behavior and perceived efficacy in self-regulation. The stronger the perceived self-regulatory efficacy, the more people will persevere in the effort to maintain moral conduct in the face of social pressures or personal desires to behave otherwise.

While there seems to be empirical support for the main constructs of Bandura's theory, Shields and Bredemeier (1995) contended that social

learning theory has failed to maintain the "cognitive interactionist perspective" that Bandura promised. Environmental factors, such as familial modeling, and changes in social influences appear to be more salient explanations for changes in behavior than the fact that cognitions change with age and experience.

Moral behavior is the cornerstone of moral being.

The need to include both environmental influences and cognitions into the development of moral reasoning has prompted several theorists to propose a more interactive view of moral development. Several theorists (e.g., Kohlberg, Gilligan, Haan) have articulated the importance of an individual's cognitions and affective capacities (such as empathy and sympathy) in determining moral behavior. While each of these theorists offers insight into the process of moral development, each remains limited. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) proposed that Kohlberg's theory reflects the development of moral reasoning, the theories of Gilligan and Hoffman describe the development of moral affect and the theory of Haan describes the development of moral skills. Shields and Bredemeier suggested that the tenets of these theorists interact and that if we are to understand moral behavior we must understand how the situation impacts the thoughts and subsequent decisions of a person to act either morally or amorally. *Shields and Bredemeier (1995) proposed through their research that moral thoughts, motivations and emotions are critical but that moral action, i.e., physical action, is the cornerstone of moral being.*

Rest's Model of Moral Action To understand moral behavior, Rest (1984) began with the question: "What do we suppose went on in the head of a person who acts morally in some situations?" According to Rest, four major processes are implicated in every moral action; deficiencies in any process can result in a failure to behave morally. The four processes include *interpreting the situation and the possibilities for action, forming a moral judgment about what should be done, choosing a value (moral or non-moral) to be upheld through action* and *carrying out the intended act.* This model recognizes the complexity of moral behavior and allows for the interaction of cognitions and affect with the situational factors in each component process.

In order to better understand the complexity of this model, each process will be presented and discussed in light of the interaction of the cognitions affect and situational factors. When appropriate, research findings will be included to support the application of the process to sport.

Interpreting the situation. The question addressed in process one is "How does the person interpret the situation?" The cognitive-affective interaction focuses on how the other person will be affected and the resultant feelings of empathy, disgust, etc. for the other person. The difficulty associated with interpreting the situation arises from contextual influences. In sport three sources of ambiguity have been noted—time pressures, rules and norms and the unobservable nature of motives (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). The pace of most games preclude time to think through these complex situational cues and coaches may even discourage athletes from reflecting on these ambiguous cues. Coaches encourage athletes to "take the play" to the injured or less skilled opponent or to do what athletes are told without thinking. The second source of ambiguity arises from the imprecise application of rules. Fans, coaches and ultimately players get upset when an umpire changes the strike zone in a youth sport baseball or softball game to force the batter, particularly a skilled batter, to swing at a pitch rather than to settle for another walk. The final source of ambiguity stems from the inability to interpret another player's motives.

Motives are interpreted from observable behavior. For example, when a baserunner slides into and injures the second baseman who is attempting to turn a double play, it is not clear whether the baserunner intended to hurt the fielder or whether the contact was accidental. Players, coaches and fans respond differently depending on how they perceive the intent of the baserunner. Several researchers (e.g., Mark, Bryant & Lehman, 1983; Smith, 1979) have concluded that perceived injustice is a main contributor to aggression and violence in sport, on the part of both athletes and spectators.

Interpreting the situation is influenced by a person's role-taking and perspective-taking ability.

From a personal competency perspective, interpreting the situation is influenced by a person's role-taking and perspective-taking ability. Role-taking ability is a person's ability to infer from relevant cues how the situation appears to others. Perspective taking is understanding how multiple views are related and coordinated. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) suggested that within sport these personal competencies influence one's interpretation of a situation as follows. A pitcher who considers throwing a fastball at the head of a batter must be able to anticipate how the batter would feel and how the action would be viewed by others, including teammates, coaches, officials,

opponents and fans. The pitcher must coordinate all this information to anticipate the likely outcome of various behavioral options.

Games and sports are microcosms of our social system that provide growing children with experiences of social rules and roles that need to be coordinated. Coakley (1984) proposed that an emphasis on rules, structured relationships and both offensive and defensive strategies should be introduced gradually to children between the ages of 8 and 12. The gradual introduction of the complex social system allows sport experiences to be kept within the social-cognitive capacities of children. Coakley (1984) and Martens (1976) both suggested that sport is a good arena for developing these social-cognitive capacities.

To successfully engage in role taking and perspective taking, a person must be able to cope with ambiguities and be empathic. A player must be able to accept the inevitable ambiguity of rules and norms without translating that ambiguity into "anything goes if you can get away with it." In sport, where opponents are both players and people, the person who can tolerate ambiguity will less readily reduce his or her opponents to objects, depersonalizing competitors in the quest for victory (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Empathy refers to the ability to become aware of another's needs. Very little research has been conducted on empathy and sport, although empathy appears to be a vital part of perspective taking.

Arriving at a judgment about the "right thing to do." The question addressed in process two is: "How does the person define the moral course of action?" A part of determining the "right thing to do" is understanding the moral atmosphere. Sport presents culturally defined relations between people and the norms and values that influence these relations. For example, if a young hockey player thinks that most of his teammates believe winning is more important than playing fair, that belief will not alter how he structurally conceptualizes fairness, but it may influence his belief about how integral those conceptualizations are to the sport of hockey. Thus, each sport and/or team determines its own moral atmosphere. The interpretation and understanding of this team or sport context is based on a person's ability to reason. Thus, moral reasoning is the personal competency which underlies arriving at a judgment of what to do.

Most research in sport has studied the moral reasoning of high school and college athletes. Hall (1986) investigated the moral reasoning stage of

male and female basketball players using dilemmas written to reflect a sport context, as well as Kohlberg's standard dilemmas. She found that athletes scored lower in their stage of reasoning than college norms reported by Kohlberg; female athletes scored higher than male athletes; and athletes' reasoning about sport-specific dilemmas reflected higher stage properties than their reasoning about standard athletics. Interestingly, the athletes' length of sport involvement was not related to moral reasoning stage. In a series of studies, Bredemeier and Shields (1984, 1986a, 1986b) assessed high school and college basketball players and non-participants' reasoning about four moral dilemmas—two set in sport and two set in everyday life. In addition, over half of the basketball players were interviewed following a game which occurred late in their season about their own aggressive basketball behavior and their perceptions of teammates and opponents' athletic aggression. Results revealed that sport moral reasoning was much more egocentric than life moral reasoning. In addition, athletes more than non-athletes changed their reasoning patterns from life to sport. This pattern was especially true for male athletes. One basketball player described the difference this way. "In sports you can do what you want. In life it's more restricted. The pressure is different in sports and life. It's harder to make decisions in life because there are so many people to think about, different people to worry about. In sports you're free to think about yourself" (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986b, pp. 262-263).

Athletes view moral reasoning differently for sport and life situations.

As in process one, emotions and empathy influence the determination of what is the right course of action. In this process, logic has been used more frequently than have the results of research to facilitate the relationship. For example, Shields and Bredemeier (1995) provided the following scenario for consideration for the use of both cognitive and affective approaches to determining moral action. A youth sport coach must decide whether to play a particularly unskilled player in the final game of an important tournament. Suppose that the coach is a morally mature individual who empathizes with the unskilled youth, perhaps identifying with such feelings as the child's yearning to play, his anxiety about fulfilling his parents' expectations and his fear that should he play he might act inappropriately and become the target of ridicule. Trying to weigh these different, vicariously roused affects, the coach may decide that the desire to play outweighs the unskilled youth's other concerns. The coach also may empathize with the other players' desires to

win but conclude that their desires are not nearly so compelling. The coach may wrestle with such questions as: Is it fair to deny my team the best chance of victory when the players have worked so hard to win? How is our strategy related to our beliefs about sportsmanship and the ideal nature of competition? Is it fair to make one player sit on the bench due to factors beyond his/her control? The integration of perceived situational factors with a person's beliefs, attitudes and values should lead a person to the options for moral behavior.

Choosing a course of moral action. The question addressed in process three is: "How does the person choose which valued outcome to pursue?" Choosing a course of action involves choice between competing motivations, such as fair play, winning, fun, or mastery. In addition, choice involves one's motivation and self-structure (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). As one is attempting to choose a course of action within the sport context, it is clear that such an environment is governed by conformity, authority and hierarchy. Equally evident is the fact that sport is permeated by a moral domain because many actions involve risk to others or self and issues of fairness arise frequently. Every sport is conducted under a specific set of game rules. Thus, one is faced with making a choice based on what the rules allow. In addition, each sport is governed by unwritten rules, or what is often termed the "spirit of the rules," which Shields and Bredemeier suggested are analogous to the moral rules. Determining a course of action results from one's understanding of these two sets of rules.

Interacting with one's knowledge of the rules is a person's self-structure. Nicholls' (1983, 1989, 1992) work in the area of achievement motivation has identified two motivational orientations which influence how we interpret situations and how we construct an achievement experience. Specifically, Nicholls proposed an ego-orientation and a task orientation. An ego orientation is one in which a person is motivated to display competency at a task relative to the accomplishments of others. A task orientation is characterized by a person wanting to meet the challenge or to better one's previous performance. Nicholls suggested that a person with a high ego achievement orientation measures achievement through comparison with others and this approach to defining success is likely to correlate with a lack of concern for moral issues like justice or fairness. A person with a task orientation defines success in terms of bettering one's own past performance

and is more likely to emphasize such values as fairness and cooperation. In support of Nicholls' views on achievement orientations, Duda (1989) found a positive view between high school athletes' view that sport should teach people such values as trying hard, cooperation, obedience to rules and being good citizens. In contrast, high school athletes who were predominantly ego-oriented tended to believe that sport should increase one's social status and show people how to survive in a competitive world. In a follow-up study, Duda, Olson and Templin (1991) reported that high school athletes who were more task-oriented endorsed less cheating behavior and expressed greater approval of "sportsmanlike" actions, while high ego oriented athletes related to high approval ratings of intentionally injurious behavior.

Motivational orientations have been found to relate to moral behavior among youth soccer players ages 10 to 14 years of age. Stephens (1993) found that soccer players who were more tempted to play unfairly were more ego- than task-oriented and perceived their coaches as being more ego- than task-oriented. Also, athletes who were high in temptation to play unfairly reported greater approval of behaviors designed to obtain an unfair advantage over an opponent, belief that more teammates would play unfairly in the same situation and had longer involvement with their current team. With the emphasis in today's society on winning as the singular criterion for defining success, youth who are ego-oriented may feel that playing unfairly or doing whatever it takes to win is the norm. Coaches have one of the best opportunities to alter this view of sport.

Leadership style and power hierarchies are key contextual influences implementing a moral action or plan.

Choice of moral actions is a result of a complex set of interactions between the self-perception of the individual and the contextual influences associated with the game rules. How persons prioritize conflicting value choices depends on such personal variables as their motivational orientation and their moral self-definition (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

Implementing the course of action. The question addressed in process four is: "How does the person implement the intention?" Leadership style and power hierarchies are key contextual influences on a person's implementing a moral action or plan. Stephens, Bredemeier, Shields, & Ryan (1992; cited in Shields & Bredemeier, 1995) reported that a coach's leadership style influenced the soccer players' decision to engage in more or less moral actions. Specifically, Stephens et al. reported that playing for more autocratic coaches resulted in youth soccer players being more likely to

express a high temptation to play unfairly. The issue of how a coach's power is exercised through direct pressure, indirect influence or some other process is not clear.

Leadership and power are also related to athletic aggression. Smith (1979) indicated that 52 percent of hockey players between the ages of 18 and 21 perceive their coaches as high approvers of violent behavior. In addition, the more coaches approved of violence, the more their players performed violent acts.

Power can be used to promote pro-social behavior as well as antisocial behavior. Coaches can encourage and reward moral actions of their players as well. Rules have been implemented which discourage dangerous play or tactics, e.g., spearing in football, throwing at a batter's head in baseball. Finally, spectators and the media can exercise their power by what they endorse or show on television or print in the paper.

Interacting with the issue of power is a person's self-regulation skills, particularly the ability to delay gratification and one's autonomy (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Long and Lerner (1974) found that fourth graders who were high on ability to delay gratification were more generous than peers who were low on ability to delay gratification. Autonomy encompasses a person's ability to define goals, to take responsibility for one's action and to assert one's self when needed, in order to conform to social expectations or pressures counter to one's view (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). A person high in autonomy may choose not to fight when being provoked or to take performance enhancement drugs or to throw a pitch at someone's head in retaliation for a home run that was just hit. Self-regulation skills are necessary to deal with internal obstacles to moral action, such as paralyzing fear, fatigue, or lack of confidence.

Evidence For and Against Sport as Contributing to Moral Development

Whether participation in sport contributes to moral development remains unresolved. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) suggested that the physical behaviors of sport are not in themselves moral or immoral. In addition, the experiences that children have in sport are far from uniform. The physical act of performing sport skills will not teach moral action.

However, the potential does exist to enhance moral development through the social interactions associated with involvement in sport.

The evidence for and against sport as contributing to moral development will focus on the areas of delinquency and aggression. Each will be reviewed separately, with conclusions drawn after reviewing all the evidence.

Delinquency In what has now become a classic work on adolescents, Coleman (1965) wrote that "if it were not for interscholastic athletics or something like it, the rebellion against school, the rate of drop-out, and the delinquency of boys might be far worse than they presently are" (pp. 44-45). Considerable evidence has been presented that sport participants are less likely than non-participants to engage in delinquent behavior (Donnelly, 1981; Hastad, Segrave, Pangrazi, & Peterson, 1984; Melnick, Vanfossen, & Sabo, 1988; Segrave, 1983; Segrave & Hastad, 1982). The negative relationship between sport participation and delinquency tends to be stronger among lower class youth (Buhrman & Bratton, 1978; Schafer, 1969; Segrave & Chu, 1978) and athletes in minor sports (Segrave & Hastad, 1982). Unfortunately, the reason for this negative correlation is unclear.

Many attempts have been made to try to explain why the negative relationship exists between delinquency and sport involvement. Sport may deter delinquency by encouraging less frequent, shorter or less intense interaction with deviant others (Hastad et al., 1984; Segrave & Hastad, 1982). Schafer (1971) proposed that the values emphasized in the sport context—such as teamwork, effort and achievement—tend toward conventionality and, therefore, may discourage the legitimization of delinquent behavior. The fact that sport involvement reduces the amount of unstructured time and that sport fosters a belief that hard work can lead to just rewards may also influence the negative relationship.

Being labeled an athlete may contribute to the decrease in delinquency, but not necessarily in a positive way. Purdy and Richard (1983) reported that athletes who engage in the same delinquent behavior as non-athletes may escape the negative label of "delinquent," may be treated less harshly by the courts and may have sufficient alternative positive labels to escape self-labeling as "delinquent." Anecdotal evidence to support this

notion is abundant in most college towns and for most of the "big" high school stars in their communities.

Participation in sport has been used successfully as a treatment of delinquency.

Participation in sport has been used as a treatment for delinquency with some success. Trulson (1986) matched 34 delinquent teenage boys on age, socio-economic background and test scores on aggression and personality adjustment and then divided the youth into three groups. One group received traditional Tae Kwon Do training, which combined philosophical reflection, meditation and physical practice of the martial arts techniques. The second group received "modern" martial arts training, emphasizing only fighting and self-defense techniques. The third group ran and played basketball and football. These groups met for one hour three times a week for six months. Results revealed that members of the Tae Kwon Do group were classified as normal rather than delinquent, scored below normal on aggression and exhibited less anxiety, increased their self-esteem and improved their social skills. The modern martial arts group scored higher on delinquency and aggression and were less well-adjusted than when the experiment began. The traditional sports group showed little change on delinquency and personality measures, but their self-esteem and social skills improved. The findings support the notion that whatever advantages or liabilities are associated with sport involvement, they do not come from sport per se, but from the particular blend of social interactions and physical activities that comprise the totality of the sport experience.

Aggression The debate continues as to whether sport contributes to increased aggression among athletes and spectators or whether sport provides an arena for the release of aggression in a socially acceptable outlet. The debate may actually be a moot one as the incidences and intensity of learned aggression vary considerably between sports, and, within a given sport, from one region of the country to another, and from one level of competition to another (M.D. Smith, 1983). Most of the research supports the notion that aggression in sport is learned. Because aggression will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 6, this section will focus on the relationship of moral action and aggressive behaviors of athletes.

Two generalizations should be made before discussing the concepts of moral action and aggression. First, male athletes are generally found to be more aggressive than female athletes (Bredemeier, 1984; Silva, 1983; M.D. Smith, 1983). In addition, males tend to express and accept more aggression

than females (Hyde, 1986). Again, these data would suggest that aggression in sport, as well as controlling one's aggression, is a learned behavior.

The relationship of moral action to aggression has received very limited attention. The work of Bredemeier and Shields is particularly noteworthy in this area. Bredemeier (1985) reported that athletes with more mature moral reasoning were less approving of aggressive tactics than those with less mature moral reasoning. In addition, athletes with "principled" moral reasoning scores were rated as significantly less aggressive by their coaches (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a). Finally, in a study of sport camp participants, Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields and Cooper (1987) showed children slides of potentially injurious sport acts and asked the children questions designed to reveal their perceptions of legitimacy. Results revealed that children with less mature moral reasoning judged a significantly greater number of aggressive acts to be legitimate than their more mature peers. Bredemeier et al. concluded that children who perceive an act as injurious are probably more likely to engage in it than children who judge it to be illegitimate. The findings support the notion that aggression is a learned behavior and that if one teaches youth about moral reasoning, one could reduce instances of aggression. Therefore, sport should be able to teach moral action as well as teach immoral action. The next section will focus on developing such a model.

The inclusion of moral education in the youth sport experience should be expected of every coach.

Implementing a Model of Moral Development in a Sports Setting

The sport environment is rich in the opportunities to teach moral reasoning and enhance moral development through the many moral challenges that exist in the social interactions both within a team and between teams or competitors. Like sport skills, however, the coach must be willing to teach moral development to children and older athletes.

The inclusion of moral education in the youth sport experience is not new. Many youth sport coaches believe that they are responsible for educating the whole child and take advantage of the opportunities that arise in sport to teach athletes how to be good sports, to empathize with athletes who are struggling with their performance or who have just lost a contest and to talk about displays of aggression or violence in sport. To be effective teachers of moral education, coaches must put the needs of his/her athletes first, followed by concerns over winning.

If youth sport coaches are to be effective moral educators, they must tailor their styles and emphases to the appropriate age level (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Beedy (1988; cited in Shields & Bredemeier, 1995) has provided several recommendations for coaching youth of various age levels. Specifically, for youth ages 8 to 10 years, cooperation should take precedence over competition. Children should not compete to obtain positions or playing time. Equal participation, cooperation and skill development should be the major goals. In addition, sport rules should be modified to emphasize perspective taking and empathy. For example, in basketball and soccer "all players have to touch the ball before a shot can be made" or "no player can make two successive shots." The idea is to teach cooperation and skill development. For youth ages 11 and 12, opportunities should be provided to assume some leadership role. Players might coach younger players or serve as officials during scrimmages. Coaches need to know the cognitive and emotional capabilities of youth of various ages and what is appropriate to teach to various age groups.

Coaches should set up a meeting with parents and discuss the moral underpinnings of their coaching philosophy. For moral education to be most effective, parents need to be able to know what the coach is teaching and to reinforce the teachings at home.

Coaches must be aware of the cognitive and emotional capabilities of youth of various ages in order to know what is appropriate to teach.

Coaches need to provide a positive experience for all athletes on their team. By providing appropriate challenges to youth, children can experience success, develop their skills and feel good about themselves (enhance their self-esteem).

Summary and Conclusions

The concepts of fair play and sportsmanship are learned through the consistent responses from coaches and parents. Moral behavior is learned through modeling the behaviors of others. The development of moral behavior is a result of cognitive development. Children must have coaches who believe in the principles of fair play and sportsmanship and who are willing to discuss the situations experienced in games and practices. The four processes involved in developing moral action include interpreting the situation and the action possibilities, forming a moral judgment about what should be done, choosing a value (moral or amoral) to seek through action and carrying out the intended act. Sport has been shown to be an effective

arena for developing moral understanding. Coaches must accept responsibility for teaching moral reasoning.

Ethical Issues in Youth Sports

Winning has become so paramount that other important values that should be inculcated by sports—team work, discipline and a sense of fair play—aren't much in evidence in American sports today.

John Underwood
A game plan for America.
In D.S. Eitzen (Ed.), Sport in Contemporary Society, (1984).

The issue of ethics in youth sports is closely associated with moral choices and actions. Ethics can be applied to everyone associated with sport—parents, coaches, administrators, media, community, and players. Peterson (1976) proposed that ethics, the theory of moral choice and behavior, is also founded on freedom of choice, thereby creating moral arenas where people judge what is most desirable or valuable. The concepts of value and choice place youth sports squarely in the realm of ethics.

Many of the topics to be discussed in this section have not been highly researched. Greater detail will be given to those topics where more systematic investigation has provided insight into the issues, if not the answers to the issues. Some topics will be introduced as food for thought as one observes what is happening in the sport arena.

Teaching Independence and Responsibility Versus Compliance and Conformity

The issue of teaching interdependence and responsibility versus compliance and conformity is a very controversial issue in the environments of sport and work. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) articulated the controversy as follows: "Sport functions as an instrument of ideological manipulation by helping to manufacture a social consensus about such values as hard work, corporate loyalty, and belief in hierarchial organization, specialization, meritocracy, and partriarchy. These values and beliefs are necessary to maintain a compliant and productive work force in the modern

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capitalist state, a set of social arrangements that, in turn, tremendously benefit a few but disadvantage and disempower many" (pp. 191-192). In support of this assertion, Berlage (1982) asked fathers of youth soccer and hockey players to identify three attributes that sports develop that they considered valuable. The values selected were those most essential to a bureaucratic and corporate structure, i.e., authoritarianism, team loyalty, and excellence in performance.

Too much emphasis is placed on winning and not enough on the physical and psychological development of youth.

Coakley (1994) stated that there is too much emphasis placed on winning and not enough on the physical and psychological development of the participants. As the organized youth sport programs became more prevalent in the post World War II era, youth sport experiences shifted from the schools and backyards and playgrounds to adult-centered events. Adults hoped that sports, especially team sports, would teach boys from lower-class backgrounds how to cooperate and work together peacefully. In the case of middle-class boys it was hoped that strenuous sport activities would turn boys into strong, assertive competitive men by providing them with an alternative to home lives dominated by women (Coakley, 1994). The vast majority of sport programs emphasized competition as a means of building the achievement orientations that would hopefully lead to personal success and community growth.

The adult organized approach to teaching youth the skills and values necessary for success in a capitalist society may be counterproductive. Leonard Koppett (1981), a sports writer and columnist, wrote, "The most important part of play is learning how to set up the game, choose sides, agree with your peers, make compromises, figure out answers, submit to self-directed rulings so that the game can continue. . . These important civilizing functions are bypassed by adult-run leagues." Koppett raised an interesting issue as to whether participation in sport does prepare our youth for our everyday work life. Coakley (1994) detailed how organized competitive sports are different from our everyday lives. These differences are presented in Table 8.

Success and failure in sport are unrelated to careers, family life, and friendships.

The purpose of this comparison is not to say that participation in organized sports is a worthless source of learning. Coakley (1994) contended that it is when the differences between sport and everyday life are recognized that people are able to open themselves up to new experiences in

Table 8. Organized, Competitive Sports Versus Everyday Life: A Comparison.

Organized, Competitive Sports	Everyday Life
• *Sports* have artificial boundaries in time and space, and participation is not universal.	• *Life* encompasses much more than competitive games and its boundaries are natural and universal (birth and death).
• *Competition* is part of sport experiences; it is often taken for granted.	• *Competition* is incidental in everyday life experiences; it is often avoided.
• *Sports* are simplistic and intentionally clearcut.*	• *Life* is complex and essentially ambiguous.*
Meanings are predefined and explicit.	*Meanings* are emergent and open to question.
Events are distinctly delimited in time and space and have definite beginnings and ends.	*Events* occur in a continuous series, each growing out of the past and leading into the future.
Evaluation is based on objective scores, and outcomes are clearcut and easy to understand.	*Evaluation* is generally subjective, and outcomes are often difficult to define and understand.
Opponents are known and confronted directly; their goals are explicit and their progress toward goals is observable.	*Opponents* may be unknown or confronted only indirectly; their goals and progress toward achieving goals may be indeterminable or intentionally hidden.
• *Rules* are clearcut and formally agreed upon; they are enforced by formal agents of control (referees, umpires, etc.) who directly observe the actions of those involved.	• *Rules* are often ambiguous and may not be based on consensus; enforcement usually depends on self-control, since formal agents of control have little or no opportunity to make direct observations.
• *Success* depends primarily on physical skills; only a minimum of interpersonal skills is required for participation.	• *Success* depends primarily on interpersonal skills and is generally unrelated to physical skill.
• *Individuals* usually seek out competitors who will test their abilities.	• *Individuals* try to avoid or eliminate the influence of competitors.
• *Events* are organized so all participants face standardized sets of conditions; everyone starts out as equals within the competitive structure of sports.	• *Events* are not organized, and everyone faces different conditions; some people have advantages over others because of inequalities.
• *Action* involves ethical choices related to immediate issues that seldom have significance beyond the event itself.	• *Action* involves ethical choices related to ultimate issues and these ethical choices sometimes have pervasive implications.

* This point has been discussed in detail by John Valentine (1980).

sports. One of these differences is the fact that success and failure in sport is unrelated to careers, family life, and friendships. In other words, playing a tennis match after school or work can be a valuable experience simply because the outcome of the game does not have any impact on grades in class, job evaluations, the love of family members, and the quality of friendships. When one's identity is tied up in sport outcomes, i.e., winning or losing, people form a very limited definition of success in life.

Teaching compliance and conformity is counter-productive to developing leadership qualities.

Teaching compliance and conformity is counterproductive to developing leadership qualities and the willingness to try something different, i.e., take risks. Leadership has been defined as "the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups toward set goals" (Barrow, 1977, p. 232). The qualities of effective leaders include intelligence, assertion (NOT compliance), empathy, intrinsic motivation, and self-confidence (Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Compliance and conformity have not been valued by persons living in a democratic culture. Leadership that is based on compliance and conformity has been labeled as a dictatorship, where persons are taught their role and are limited in what they can aspire to contribute to society. Within the adult-organized youth sport arena, compliance with rules and expectations of coaches and parents is extremely valued. During children's formative years it is critical that they be taught skills that are more closely aligned with everyday life, i.e., to value cooperation and caring about others, and to be allowed to take risks in a "safe" environment where they can learn from their successes and failures, gain confidence in their abilities to meet a challenge, and to develop leadership skills that will foster growth in a culture where the power is in the hands of a few. Teaching responsibility and independence may be a better way to prepare youth for life.

If people wish that life could be more like sports, they are expecting too much from sports. A former NFL player noted, "[Athletes are] in one of the most highly stressed jobs in the country, and there's no assistance, so its gonna continue to turn out guys who are mentally unstable, bankrupt, divorced, alcohol and substance abusers. Athletes are set up to be very high-risk people in terms of being abusers of things—money, substances, everything. These problems have to be dealt with by attacking the problem, and not just the symptom. And the problem is being ill-prepared for life" (cited in Coakley, 1994). Merlin Olsen (cited in Coakely, 1994) observed

from his experience in football that "the athlete doesn't have to grow up because the coach lives his life for him. . . .the sad thing is [that] it actually benefits the team to keep the player naive and dependent." Similarly, Dorcas Butt (1976) a former top-ranked tennis player in Canada agreed, "social behavior expected of an athlete resembles in many ways that expected of a young, ill, or irresponsible person." The unquestioned adherence to rules deprives athletes of the very experiences needed to become responsible and mature people.

The unquestioned adherence to rules deprives athletes of the very experiences needed to become responsible and mature people.

Sport can provide the experiences necessary to teach our youth to be independent and responsible. To do this, however, some changes will need to be made in the adult-centered programs. These changes should be made with the physical, social, and psychological needs of the children placed ahead of the organizational needs of the programs and ahead of the adult coaches' needs to experience success as defined in adult sport programs. In addition, changing rules to increase the amount of action in a game would allow more opportunities for children to learn skills and to experience both success and failure. Limited action enhances the significance associated with every error or mistake that a child makes. Through overcoming errors children gain confidence and become more independent in assessing their own performances. Coaches need to use challenging or difficult situations as a way to teach youth responsible decision-making. Youth athletes need to understand that there are consequences associated with each decision they make. This process increases the understanding of being responsible.

In addition to rule changes, using equipment that is more appropriate for youth's physical capabilities would allow for more action and increase the confidence of the children. For example, the use of a "reduced injury factor" baseball reduces the fear that youth have of being hit with a ball that is thrown or struck. This means that softball and baseball players will not be afraid to try to make a play because they know they will not be hurt. Other changes could include creating equitable playing opportunities for all the children on a team. This means that all of the children would be starters as well as substitutes and children could learn to play all of the positions on a team and not be specialized simply by their physical stature. Teach sportsmanship and interpersonal skills that reflect those valued by society. Coaches should be models of these behaviors if they are to work with our youth. Because most of our youth sport coaches and a majority of our high school coaches are

volunteers or non-faculty, respectively, coaches' education appears to be essential to help these well-intentioned individuals understand the needs of the youth they are teaching as well as develop the skills to teach sports skills and ethics.

The valuing of sport as a social environment for preparing youth for adult roles has been limited, unfortunately, to boys. As society has changed and women are seeking, and assuming, more leadership roles, the valuing of the benefits and lessons learned from sport must be provided for girls. The devaluing of these benefits and lessons for girls will be discussed later in this section. It is also possible that these benefits and lessons are more valued for European American males than for minority males.

Equality of Opportunity for Males and Females

Gender equity is all about being fair to our children.

"Gender equity is all about being fair to our children. We will only solve the financial dilemma of providing more opportunities for women in sport if men and women in sport sit down together to decide how to fairly share limited resources; resources that in the past have been invested primarily in men's sports. Sport is one of the most important socio-cultural learning experiences in our society. It cannot benefit only our sons" (Donna Lopiano, 1993, cited in Lindahl, 1994). The catalyst for the gender equity movement was the passage of Title IX in 1972. This amendment to the education amendments provides in part that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Following the passage of Title IX, girls and women have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of school, community, and club programs that did not exist 25 years ago.

While participation rates are often the main barometer of how women are faring in the battle for equity, it is critical to also consider the structural and ideological issues that continue to be a part of any discussion of gender equity (Coakley, 1994). For example, one of the structural issues facing girls in high school is that their games/matches are often played during the week and boys games are played on Friday nights. This distinction is important; many people contend that there is little interest in viewing girls' sporting events, when the reality is that most families would view it to be inappropriate to take their children out to a game on a school night when they

would be late getting to bed and have their children's educational success jeopardized by a loss of sleep. Friday nights have become the traditional high school sport night in most communities. Equity suggests that the formulation of a schedule whereby the girls played on Wednesday and Friday one week and Tuesday and Thursday the next would assure that the community had a chance to view both girls' and boys' games.

An ideological issue that may be the largest single deterrent to equity in participation is the definition of masculinity and femininity. Because athletics has been viewed as a masculine activity, male athletes have been characterized by such words as assertive, strong, and skillful while female athletes are described as poised and toned. Parents, the primary socializing agents of our youth, have fallen into this ideological trap as revealed by a mother's recent comment about her daughter playing basketball, "I'm so glad my daughter found basketball. She has lost weight and is more toned since she started playing."

Emphasizing "cosmetic fitness" and thinness for girls is one of the most subtle, and vicious forms of inequity.

This growing emphasis on "cosmetic fitness" and thinness is one of the most subtle, and perhaps the most vicious, forms of inequity. Perhaps contributing to the growing emphasis on thinness for girls and women is the decline in the number and proportion of women coaches and administrators, and the accompanying increase in the number of male coaches of girls' teams at all levels. Without seeing women in leadership roles and hearing their voices as it relates to what is an acceptable image of the female athlete, young girls will continually be faced with the power differential that exists in our society and the view that they must do whatever they can to please men. Women coaches are more aware of the needs of female athletes and the barriers that exist to their achieving as athletes. Female coaches are more likely to praise girls for their skillfulness, aggressiveness, and strength than male coaches, who hold more traditional images of women. Women coaches and administrators are also more aware of the subtle forms of discrimination that operate in sports today.

A second issue associated with the decline in the number of women coaches and administrators is that young women may not perceive sport participation as an important part of their own future, because they do not see women in positions of authority and power. If women are not visible throughout the entire structure of sport programs, people within, and outside of, sport tend to conclude that women's involvement is not appropriate or

valued. A similar ideological issue has kept most black men and women out of coaching and management positions in sport. As Arthur Ashe (1992) so clearly noted, ". . . the crazy theories of black intellectual inferiority are alive and well . . . .[Coaches and] managers have to think, and the conventional wisdom among sports' ruling elite is, that . . . . blacks don't think as well as whites." While introducing racial discrimination may seem confounding to the issue of gender equity, we must consider that black females face the very real possibility of being discriminated against twice, which may be one of the reasons we see even fewer black female coaches at all levels.

Other Ethical Issues Related to Sport Practice

From discussions with parents, coaches and sport administrators, there are many other issues that relate to ethical practices in the conduct of sport for youth. One of these issues is the impact of being "too good, too soon" in sport, otherwise known as "early stardom." This issue has been highlighted most recently in the world of women's tennis where such young phenoms as Jennifer Capriati and Venus Williams have been watched as they enter the professional ranks while still young adolescents. The disservice that has been done to Jennifer Capriati is perhaps the most difficult to accept. Jennifer has been described as one of the most powerful hitters in the game as well as one of the most athletic. Her father, who gave up his full-time job to serve as her coach and manager, entered Jennifer in several major tennis events. She performed extremely well, but her performance in front of the media revealed the immature social and emotional abilities of a 14 year old person who was embarrassed, giggled a lot, and had little to say. While Jennifer had acquired the physical skills early to compete with adults, her social and emotional skills were developing at the appropriate rate. The pressure that she felt was extreme and she ended up leaving tennis and trying to create a more "normal" teenage life. To get away from the pressure she ran away from home and was found with so-called friends who had introduced her to the world of drugs. Jennifer dropped out of tennis tournaments for almost a year, returning only recently to some minor tournaments. Whether Jennifer Capriati's return is a "success" story or another example of what the pressures associated with early stardom can do to young athletes remains to be seen.

Social and emotional skills of young star athletes are underdeveloped compared to their physical abilities.

A second ethical issue associated with teenage athletes is athletic eligibility. Within the academic arena, the issue of athletic eligibility is tied to academic standards. In many instances these standards are not particularly rigorous. For example, in a recent article about a high school senior basketball player, the athlete was described as a Division I player who was no longer being recruited because he was a non-qualifier. He had failed to maintain a 2.0 GPA in his core subjects. He still had options to attend smaller colleges at the Division II and III levels, but it was doubtful that he would attend a Division I school. Another article in the same paper discussed the ramifications of lowering the required GPA for athletic participation from 2.0 to 1.9. The student-athlete admitted that he could have done much better in his academic work if he had spent less time practicing basketball. The ethical issue is not related only to high schools that allow students to practice and play when they are failing more subjects than they are passing at the "average" level. The issue relates to participation on sport teams that are sponsored outside of the interscholastic arena. Participation on most athletic teams that are not under the auspices of academic institutions (e.g., AAU teams) is not limited or restricted by academic performance.

Sport organizations have a responsibility to protect children from unqualified coaches.

Finally, the issue of unqualified adults as coaches and role models must be addressed. There is a growing concern about the motives and behaviors of many of the coaches who work with our youth. These concerns relate to the negative coaching practices that are used to "teach" sport skills. Many of these practices are abusive. For example, coaches have been observed hitting children to get them to tighten their stomach muscles; coaches have been heard to yell derogatory comments at youth to shame them into acting more manly and to teach by intimidation (emotional abuse); and, coaches have been accused and convicted of sexual abuse of youth sport participants. In many instances, these behaviors have been shrugged off as "part of the game." What is perhaps most confusing about these incidents is that these coaches were seldom reprimanded or, perhaps more appropriately, dismissed from their roles. The few that have been dismissed have resurfaced in another community as a coach, and the process repeated itself. Perhaps the biggest disservice associated with this behavior is that the youth who observes or experiences the abuse believe that the coach's behavior is acceptable, because corrective action is seldom taken by the persons in administrative roles. This sets the stage for the same behavior to be repeated

later when the youth become coaches of the next generation. Sport organizations have a primary responsibility to provide a safe environment for our youth. A major part of this responsibility involves protecting children from abusive coaches.

While the issue of child abuse among coaches is receiving greater scrutiny, one other practice deserves mention with respect to unqualified adults as coaches. This issue involves the differences in treatment of boys and girls in an educational environment. Sadker and Sadker (1994), in their recent book entitled **Failing at fairness: How our schools cheat girls,** have chronicled the discrimination that occurs in most of our school's classrooms. After observing many classrooms from elementary to college, Sadker and Sadker summarize their findings as follows: ". . . female students are more likely to be invisible members of classrooms. Teachers interact with males more frequently, ask them better questions, and give them more precise and helpful feedback. Over the course of years the uneven distribution of teacher time, energy, attention, and talent, with boys getting the lion's share, takes its toll on girls. . . .The problems [girls] face—loss of self-esteem, decline in achievement, and elimination of career options—are at the heart of the educational process." In addition, our schools tolerate sexual harassment of adolescent girls by adolescent boys under the guise that "boys will be boys" and hormone levels are high in high school.

Male coaches of female athletes must learn how their feedback and behavior perpetuate sex discrimination.

Sports programs must be cognizant of the lessons that are being taught by the volunteer coaches who are often totally unaware that the use of motivational feedback with girls and instructional feedback with boys, low expectations for achievement, and the use of such "cutesy" terms as "cookie" and "munchkin" are forms of sexist discrimination. Girls learn very early that speaking up against such practices are ineffective and result in even harsher indictments about their sexuality. These are harsh lessons for young girls to learn. Much more research is needed at all levels in the sport arena to highlight how coaches both harass and discriminate against female athletes. It is an issue that should not be put on hold until the research is done by sport organizations. If it exists in the classrooms, it is likely that the same behaviors occur in the sport arena.

Equity in Programs, Policies and Expectations for Girls and Minorities

The real issue behind gender equity is who gets what resources. People today parrot the notion that women should have the right to participate in sport because it is only fair. However, in sport programs in which men control most of the power and resources, few have been willing to sacrifice men's participation, support, or jobs to achieve equity. Lopiano (1991, cited in Coakley, 1994) has urged people in sport sponsoring organizations to use the following strategies to promote gender equity. Most of these strategies could be applied equally effective in promoting racial equity.

- Confront discriminatory practices in your organizations and become advocates for women athletes, coaches and administrators.
- Learn about and educate others about the history of discrimination in sports and how to recognize the subtle forms of discrimination that operate in sports today.
- Object to any policies that would result in a decrease in women's sport participation or opportunities for participation.
- Package and promote women's sports as revenue producers so there will be financial incentives to increase opportunities for participation.
- Recruit women athletes into coaching, and establish internships and other programs to recruit and train women to enter jobs at all levels in your organizations.
- Be an advocate and a watchdog and insist on fair and open employment practices in your organization.
- Keep track of data in your organization and publish a "gender equity score card" every year.
- Use women's hiring networks when looking for coaches and administrators in all sport programs.
- Create a supportive work climate for women in your organization, and establish policies to eliminate sexual harassment.

Strategies for promoting gender and race equity involve public relations, political lobbying, pressure, education and advocacy.

Coakley (1994) agreed that these suggestions, which emphasize a combination of public relations, political lobbying, pressure, education, and advocacy, are important, but that one of the underlying issues that is not

addressed in these strategies is the connection between sports and existing dominant definitions of masculinity in society. Without rethinking this connection, sport organizations will end up contributing to and recreating a set of ideas about social life that not only work to advantage men but guarantee that there will always be gender and race inequities in sport.

Summary and Conclusions

Ethics are founded on freedom of choice, creating moral arenas where people judge what is most desirable or valuable. One of the ethical issues in sport centers is teaching independence versus compliance and conformity. The concepts of authoritarianism, loyalty and excellence in performance are often the lessons acquired through sport participation. These lessons are essential to a bureaucratic and corporate structure. These lessons are counterproductive to developing leadership qualities and the willingness to try new things. Teaching responsibility, assertiveness and independence are better lessons to teach youth.

A second ethical issue facing sport organizers, coaches and parents is the inequality of opportunity for males and females in sport. Always placing girls' sports on weekday evenings and boys' sports on Friday evenings disadvantages girls. It is easier for family and community supporters to attend games on Friday evenings because there is no school on Saturday. Girls are being taught that participation in sport is a way to stay thin. Their displays of skillfulness are seldom rewarded and being a physically strong and assertive female is devalued. Male coaches contribute to this view both directly and indirectly. Other ethical issues included early stardom in sport, athletic eligibility and the lack of qualifications of adult coaches, which may have contributed to child abuse and discrimination of girls and minorities. Strategies for promoting gender and racial equity were identified.

Youth Sports as a Deterrent to Negative Behavior

> *Simply getting young people to play sports will* ***not*** *keep them from engaging in deviant behaviors. Positive results can occur if sport participation occurs in conjunction with a philosophy of nonviolence, respect for self and others, the importance of fitness and control over self, confidence in physical skills and a sense of responsibility.*
>
> Coakley, 1994, p. 149.

Along with the positive outcomes of learning sports skills and enhanced personal characteristics, youth sports can also act as a deterrent to negative behavior. The role of sports as a safe alternate activity to violence and intimidation is gaining interest due to increasing concern with flourishing gang membership. Youth sports, specifically, may be considered a venue for reflecting or shaping society's acceptance or disapproval for violence and aggression. This chapter will focus on differentiating aggression and violence in youth sports as well as offer ways in which youth sports and the interaction with adult leaders (coaches, parents, media) can be an alternative from socially unaccepted behavior. Youth sport participation as an alternative to gang membership, and its ability to foster resiliency, will also be discussed.

Abatement of Aggression and Violence Through Youth Sports

Aggression in sport is verbal or physical behavior with the intent to harm another.

There has been an abundance of research on the causes of aggression and violence in sport. At the heart of the debate is whether sports can offer a socially acceptable arena for aggressive behavior or whether the aggressive nature of sports fosters violent behavior. To better understand the issues, it is important to understand the various forms that aggression may take. Aggression is verbal or physical behavior with the intent to harm another, psychologically or physically. This general definition has been further differentiated into two forms: hostile and instrumental aggression (Bredemeier, 1983). Hostile aggression, also known as "angry aggression"

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(Berkowitz, 1972), is behavior with the intent to inflict injury or pain on an identified target. According to Berkowitz, this target has often perturbed the aggressor, leading to an emotional response employed for the sake of injury.

An emotional response with the intent to injure is an ordinary outcome of frustration inherent to competition, especially in contact sports. For example, in hockey it is common for an aggressive player to be illegally checked into the boards if the opposing team feels frustrated regarding that individual's play or as a payback to previous rough play. A second form of aggression is instrumental aggression. Instrumental aggression in sport, which involves the intent to harm another person, is often rewarded by money, victory or praise. These tactics include provoking, intimidating or taking out players for the sake of personal and team success. Known as the "Bad Boys" for their intimidating behavior, the Detroit Pistons in the 1980s is an example of a team being rewarded with success and praise for what often appeared to be questionable behavior. To add to the confusion, assertion or assertive behavior (Silva, 1980) has been defined as forceful, physical, goal-directed behavior, which is often perceived as an appropriate form of aggression in sport. Instrumental aggression and assertion are closely linked, creating a fine line between a brush-back pitch and a beanball pitch in baseball.

Aggression and assertiveness are valued in sports. Behavior that lacks intent to harm should be encouraged as acceptable behavior by coaches, parents and educators of young athletes. However, hostile and instrumental aggression are rewarded equally as "part of the game" in sports. Regardless, the definitions of aggression and assertion are very closely linked, and often create ambiguity when classifying behaviors. The similarity and differences between three forms of aggression are reflected in Figure 1 (LeUnes & Nation, 1989).

With hostile aggression, the goal is to harm; in instrumental aggression, it is to win; and in assertive aggression, it is to play with optimal enthusiasm, force and skill. Also, the hostile athlete's behavior is fueled by anger, the instrumental athlete's behavior is without anger, and the assertive athlete's behavior has no relevance with anger.

Figure 1. Illustration of the Similarities and Distinctions Between Three Forms of Aggression

Figure 7.1 Relationship among Hostile Aggression, Instrumental Aggression, and Sport Assertiveness

Adult leadership must encourage non-injury inducing behavior.

Participation in youth sports provides an opportunity to alleviate aggressive tendencies within the context of organized motor skills. A catharsis effect, or releasing of pent up frustration, is an optimal outcome in sports participation. Again, the adult leadership must encourage non-injury inducing behavior. In arguing for this cathartic effect, theories have developed regarding human instinct, frustration-motivated behavior and learning in sports. Instinctive theory has its roots in the research ideology of Sigmund Freud. Freud conceptualized the internal buildup of destructive energy, which if not intentionally released would be involuntarily turned on the self, resulting in depression or suicide, or others, resulting in murder or warfare (Husman & Silva, 1984). Within the sports context, an individual is allowed to release this innate energy in a controlled and monitored physically exhausting environment.

Frustration-aggression theory states that aggression is a direct result of frustration (Husman & Silva, 1984). The frustration-aggression model proposes a circular effect in which frustration and unsuccessful aggression can actually lead to more frustration and heightened aggressive behavior. For example, as in the previous example of the brushback pitch in baseball, if the batter subsequently hits a grand slam homerun after a brushback pitch, the next batter might be hit with a pitch. Frustration-aggression theory has come

under great criticism for oversimplifying the direction of frustration, as solely and invariably, preceding aggression.

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1973) opposes the catharsis theory by stating that aggression is reinforced, rather than alleviated, by aggression. Reinforcement and modeling are the two primary mechanisms by which aggressive behavior is fostered. For instance, the "hard" foul or "cheap shot" elbows displayed by NBA and college basketball players are carried out by youth in recreation leagues. Aggressive (harmful or socially unacceptable) acts on the part of players that are reinforced by either implicit consent or by a lack of punishment on the part of coaches or parents may be seen as acceptable behavior.

The effects of modeling and reinforcement present the most compelling argument for decreasing the visibility of socially unaccepted and aggressive sport behavior by the media. Before discussing the role of the media, a similar and often interchangeably used term, violence, will be discussed.

The media can help decrease socially unaccepted aggressive behavior by decreasing implied approval and glorification of the act.

A definition of violence, as presented by Terry and Jackson (1985), is "harmful inducing behavior bearing no direct relationship to the competitive goals of sport, and relates, therefore, to incidents of uncontrolled aggression outside the rules of sport, rather than highly competitive behavior within the rule boundaries." This definition offers acceptance of the terms aggression and violence to be used interchangeably. However, Smith (1983) presents a typology of sports violence which differentiates behavior in terms of views of the law, the public and the players. This typology is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A Sports Violence Typology.

Relatively legitimate		**Relatively illegitimate**	
Brutal body contact	Borderline violence	Quasicriminal violence	Criminal violence
conforms to the official rules of the sport, hence legal in effect under the law of the land; more or less accepted.	violates the official rules of the sport and the law of the land; but widely accepted	violates official rules of the sport, the law of the land, and significantly the informal player norms; more or less not accepted.	violates official rules of the sport, the law of the land, and player norms; not accepted.

The typology in Figure 2 allows one to see aggressive behavior on a continuum, which has a two-fold purpose. First, behavior can be categorized and discussed with youth who may regard the conduct as appropriate. For instance, if a youth soccer player is watching a teammate kick the goalie in the head (Nabozny v. Barnhill, 1975), he/she will understand through discussion with coaches and parents, that this behavior is criminal behavior and completely unacceptable. Second, this typology allows for some types of aggression, namely instrumental aggression as related to brutal body contact, to be seen as acceptable behavior for the sport. The portrayal of these more brutal acts by the media lends legitimacy to the act.

Reports and representations of violent acts in the media are staggering. One needs only to watch the local, national and international news broadcasts to see violence permeating every aspect of our society. The news and selected sports channels also offer a plethora of highlight films, full of replays, of overly aggressive plays in all sports. In some instances, the fights or cheap shots occur so rapidly that slow motion replays are used to obtain the desired result. Slow motion replays for purposes of glorifying violence in sport, while regarded as economically imperative, are indicative of irresponsible use of television by the broadcasting industry (Rapaport, 1986). The use of slow motion replays has a tendency to promote or glorify violent behaviors, particularly in football, boxing and hockey. If, according to social learning theory, children are modeling professional athletes, then what are they learning? An exhaustive list of illegal behaviors that young players learn from watching professional hockey players was generated by Smith (1982). An example of these actions includes hitting the back of the legs with one's stick, throwing elbows to the head, tripping, and hitting the stomach with the hockey stick.

A heightened interest and awareness by society of violence in sports may be a result of lowered tolerance by society as well as increased media coverage (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967). Public and government hearings concerning the sensationalism of isolated violent events within the sport realm, have prompted a closer look at this phenomena and its impact on youth sport. While sports is seen as inherently competitive and conducive to aggression and violence, participation is an opportunity for the athlete to learn to cope with these tendencies more effectively. Youth sports participation must become a place where assertive behaviors can be learned and displayed,

Sports participation is an opportunity for the athlete to learn to cope with violent tendencies more effectively.

but in a controlled and appropriate manner. The nature of sports should not take on a philosophy that the only way to win is through violent, physically destructive acts. Non-contact sports, such as swimming or track and field, foster an environment for an individual to compete without harming others. Contact sports present the challenge to coaches and parents to stress to youth the importance of learning the game, its skills and strategies; thus, the physical contact becomes a part of the game in a nonviolent manner. For instance, there are numerous examples within basketball where post players are involved in heavy contact, yet the behavior is not causing injury to another player nor is it regarded as criminal behavior.

Coaches have a responsibility to set the tone for discouraging violent behaviors in sport.

Even though the environment of a particular sport or team may be nonviolent, it is important to teach our youth appropriate ways to cope with the frustration and assertive behaviors they experience in sport. The very individuals who influence and encourage violent behavior (coaches, parents, the media) must take initiative to discourage this type of behavior in youth sports and to reinforce pro-social behavior (LeUnes & Nation, 1989).

Coaches have a responsibility to set the tone for discouraging violent behavior in sports. Encouraging good sportsmanlike conduct such as pre and post game handshakes or helping another player or teammate up who has fallen are needed in youth sports. Coaches understand the nature of aggression and violence in sports and its impact on children. In addition, they must become knowledgeable in ways to stop acts which border on being violent. Players must be taught to take responsibility for their own aggressive behavior, and if these urges are uncontrollable, seek help from coaches, parents and other sport leaders. The media could assist in decreasing violent episodes in sports in three major ways: (1) do not glorify violent athletes and their behavior, (2) promote exemplary behavior, and (3) resist promoting hostility between teams.

Applications of the various theories have come under attack and actually lead to the questioning of the role of youth sports as facilitating or lessening aggressive behaviors in sport. However, youth sports can be the environment to exercise aggressive behaviors within a regulated and nonviolent context. In this way athletes may eliminate the general tendency toward increased aggression (Russell, 1989).

Youth Sports as a Substitute for Gang Membership

Reasons for joining gangs include alienation from family and peers.

Participation in sports by youth is a highly desirable alternative for gang membership. Society's current attention on the destructive nature of youth gang involvement has prompted much research over the past two decades. Historically, conditions for the foundation of gangs have been familiar to the inner city: poverty, racial division, broken families and high unemployment (Stover, 1986). Current information on gangs has involved the identification of other conditions for gang membership such as age (Parks, 1995) and inter/intra personal conflicts (Curry, 1992). Furthermore, gang activity is no longer isolated in the inner city, but has infiltrated many suburban and rural communities. For example, Los Angeles reported an identified 200,000 gang members in 1991, Chicago spent $7 million on anti-gang efforts, and gangs have infiltrated Albuquerque, Phoenix and Milwaukee. What is more alarming is that contemporary gangs are more violent than earlier gangs (Evans, 1995) indicating that the problem is getting worse and more dangerous. Where gangs of the 1960s were more concerned with fist fights over "turf," contemporary gangs are involved in drug trafficking and the use of weapons, including an arsenal of assault rifles.

Reasons identified for initial gang membership include a combination of family, school and personal conflicts as reported by juvenile delinquents (Clark, 1992; Fukada, 1991). Alienation from family and peers included lack of companionship, support or social interaction. Reported problems in school were poor grades and discipline issues. Personal struggles included low self-esteem and self-worth. Furthermore, the lack of a positive role model was a differentiating factor of gang and non-gang members (Wang, 1994) indicating the importance of positive roll models in the lives of youth. Non-gang members were three times more likely to mention a teacher or parent as a role model. Furthermore, the absence of a role model was the best predictor of gang membership, which corroborates other research suggesting that intrafamilial socialization and parental support are among the most significant determinants of gang membership (Johnstone, 1983).

The reasons for continued membership in a gang have also been well documented. Gang membership provides affiliation, self-worth, companionship and excitement (Clark, 1992). The gang fills a void in a youth's life which was created by the environmental and inter/intra personal conflicts discussed above. Once joining a gang, the youth develops a

responsibility to the other members, as well as a duty to help the gang prosper. The gang also provides a self-identity or valued role which is reinforced by the group, such as the provider, whose "job" is to obtain money for gang use by burglary or drug dealing (Vigil, 1988). No gender or racial discrimination has been shown in gang membership (Fiqueira-McDonough, 1986) dispelling the widely held notion that gangs are comprised largely of African-American males. An increasing number of females, as well as Hispanics, Asians and Caucasians are now involved in gang membership.

Sports teams can provide affiliation, self-worth, companionship, role identity and responsibility.

Youth sports have the greatest opportunity to offer an alternative to gang activity by filling the same void, and by being able to cross socio-economic and gender boundaries. A sports team can provide affiliation, self-worth, companionship, role identity, responsibility and excitement without the often life-ending consequences of gang membership. A sport, whether team or individual, provides a connection to other teammates, opposing teammates and adult leaders. Within the team concept, a player's role may be determined by the coach and reinforced by the team. For example, on a basketball team, a player's role and responsibility may be to rebound. Although this role may have been assigned by the coach, the team can reinforce the importance of rebounding as a part of a team effort. While every sporting event cannot be as exciting as a last second three-point shot to win the game, the element of competition and performance presents the environment for excitement.

It is critical that youth be offered an alternative to gangs at an early age.

Youth sport participation is a practical substitute for gang membership. Initiation into sports at a young age allows for a positive filling of the void in a youth's life at a critical stage. Early intervention is recommended as a tool to curb delinquent behavior which would most likely continue over a lifetime (Laub, 1994). The highest rate of criminal offenders with chronic anti-social behavior began involvement in crime at an earlier age than offenders with shorter and lower incidence careers. Continued intervention is crucial in the lives of youth who are facing a pivotal choice about whether or not to join a gang. Delinquent behavior by gang members was shown to be lower before and after gang membership, showing the positives for decreasing criminal activity outside of the gang (Thornberry, 1993). The focus has been on prevention and intervention strategies; however, once in a gang, getting out may not be the easiest task to achieve.

However, leaving the gang is a consideration of many members (Hochhaus & Sousa, 1988). Peer pressure was identified by current gang members as the most important reason for not leaving a gang. Some members expressed dissonance when asked to take part in stealing, drug dealing or violence, but the peer pressure outweighed the guilt. The desire to leave is the most promising of avenues for youth sports to reach young people who have already joined the gang. Offering an alternate activity which provides the same qualities as gang membership should become part of the recruitment strategy for youth sports.

Youth sport participation offers early intervention by providing the opportunity for learning sports skills as young as 6 years old, such as T-ball, soccer and swimming. This alternate activity gives youth the chance to enhance companionship, participate in self-worthy and responsible behavior and experience excitement. Once in the sport, youth have the opportunity to become highly competitive, involving huge amounts of time, and both physical and mental commitment. Or youth can participate in recreational sports, which tend to be less competitive, thus allowing for more fun, but still having an alternative to violence on the streets. Coaches become significant role models who have the responsibility to interact positively with these youth, understand their plight and life choices and provide viable opportunities to learn and compete in sports. With continued participation in sports, another type of peer pressure is experienced. Young athletes learn the value of hard work and commitment which comes from the desire to be part of a good team or to win a particular game.

Resiliency and the Role of Significant Others as a Deterrent to Violence

The previous sections discussed the definitions and manifestations of aggression and violence with respect to youth sports' influence as a deterrent to such behavior. With the choice being sports or gang membership, sport participation is the viable alternative to a life of criminal activity, and part of the answer to environmental and personal adversity. This section will discuss an individual's resilience, how it is fostered and the role of significant others.

Resiliency, or the ability to cope in the face of adversity, can be practiced in the sport setting.

Resiliency is an individual's ability to cope in the face of adversity or to recover rapidly from misfortune (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). This is an integral aspect of youth sport competition. Sport participation is believed to be an opportunity for youth to engage in controlled aggression, defeat (sometimes repeatedly), adversity and physical pain. From learning a new skill to attending sometimes difficult practices to recovering from a loss or bad performance, an individual's ability to come back and try again is tested repeatedly throughout involvement in youth sports.

Within the psychological literature, resiliency has many components. Four personality characteristics are detected in children who are considered to be resilient: social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy and sense of purpose and future (Baxley, 1993; Werner, 1995). Other personal characteristics of resilient youth include high self-esteem and self-efficacy (Turner, 1995) in pre-adolescents. Along with personal characteristics, resilient youth also have significant environmental influences: a caring relationship with another person, high family and community expectations and opportunities to participate in meaningful activities (Baxley, 1993). Participation in meaningful activities is supported in research with emphasis on extracurricular activities and community activities (Gordon, 1995; Braverman, 1994). Research on resilient youth found those individuals who had participated in extracurricular activities, such as sports or community programs, had developed more cognitive skills and social competence, than less resilient youth. Findings on the evaluation of Late Night Basketball indicated several benefits, including fun, opportunity for jobs and scholarships, reducing gang violence and new relationships with adults and peers (Derezotes, 1995).

Youth sport participation fosters resilience by providing the experiences to view failure as a challenge and a chance to perform better in the next contest. Team structure and effective leaders allow the individual to learn and improve his/her own physical and social competence. For instance, a young person may have little or no experience in tennis, but a coach, team or recreation leader can provide the opportunity to play and improve in the sport. The universal nature of sport participation allows youth to interact with a diverse group of children. Children may be on a team consisting of school and/or neighborhood peers, or of youth from another side of town.

Good sportsmanlike conduct, encouraged by the coach, allows the player to interact positively with opposing team members. The team structure provides the player with a defined role and a sense of belonging and responsibility to the group. Youth sport participation affords an individual the optimal environmental conditions for resilience by providing the opportunity for a positive coach- player relationship, high expectations for performance and numerous occasions to show improved sport skills.

Resilient children possess protective factors which have allowed them to overcome great adversity. These protective factors, not all encompassing, include family cohesion, locus of control, and parent communication (Grossman, 1992). This knowledge gives the coach an opportunity to get the family involved in their child's participation in sports. Simple interaction and communication from the coach to the family allows for creating a support system for the youth, his/her family and the community. This line of research also identifies the importance of engaging the youth in a support system, consisting of extended family, teachers and coaches. Often the lines of adult leadership transcend boundaries, and a youth, if lucky, can establish a support system.

Youths that possess resilience also build meaningful attachments to adults.

It is the responsibility of the coaches, teachers and parents to also initiate communication regarding the physical and psychological well being of the youth. Youths that possess resilience also build meaningful attachments to adults or substitute caregivers (Werner, 1995). Establishing a relationship with mentors allows for positive reinforcement and trust, thus enhancing adaptation and coping strategies through adverse times (Rhodes, 1994). Hence, the role of the coach becomes even more significant.

Youth programs, especially sports, have the ability to promote resiliency by developing a positive coach-player relationship. The role of the coach provides a tremendous opportunity to influence a child's life. Unfortunately, this can be a positive or negative situation (Smoll & Smith, 1989). A coach's influence is not just on the playing field, but extends into other facets of a youth's life as well. The nature of this unique relationship is critical to the overall experience of youth sports. Coaches become important by offering good advice and useful assistance at key points in athlete's lives, offering guidance during crises and everyday stresses (Coakley, 1994). To make this an even easier role for coaches, most interscholastic athletes expect coaches to be understanding, patient and sensitive (Steinbrecher et al, 1978).

To be prepared for this job, there have been many training programs developed to address the issues discussed in this book, to enhance the ability of coaches to interact positively with youth. Coaching strategies for youth are particularly important to establish a clear understanding of the effects of sport participation and the varied life experiences each youth brings to the setting.

Summary and Conclusions

Sports participation provides a safe alternative activity to violence and intimidation. Hostile and instrumental aggression should never be a part of sport. However, assertive behavior is a valued part of sport. Adult leadership must encourage non-injury inducing behavior. Sports violence varies on a continuum from brutal body contact to criminal violence. The media can help decrease socially unaccepted aggressive behavior by decreasing implied approval and glorification of violent acts in sport. Coaches have a responsibility to set the tone for discouraging violent behaviors in sport. Participation in sport can provide an alternative to gang membership by providing affiliation, enhanced self-worth, companionship and learning effective ways to cope with frustration. Resiliency, or the ability to cope in the face of adversity, can be practiced in the sport setting. Resilient children possess protective factors that allow them to overcome adversity.

Contributions of Sport to Physical Health and Well-Being

> *We are under-exercised as a nation. We look instead of play. We ride instead of walk. Our existence deprives us of the minimum of physical activity essential for healthy living.*
>
> John F. Kennedy, President
> Address to the National Football Foundation, New York, NY
> December 5, 1961.

Sports and Health

The supposition that American youth were not sufficiently active, physically, to derive the health-related benefits of exercise astounded the American public in the mid-1950s, only to reverberate with systematic regularity after the results of each national fitness test were published (American Medical Association, 1990; Fitness of American Youth, 1957; Hunsicker, 1958; Kraus & Hirshland, 1954; McCloy, 1956; Pate, 1983; Ross & Gilbert, 1985; Wilmore, 1982). The early leadership by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy concerning the health and fitness of American children has now been appropriated by numerous organizations, under the urging of former Surgeon General Richmond (Promoting Health/Preventing Disease: Objectives for the Nation, 1980), Secretary of Health and Human Services, L. Sullivan (Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives, 1990) and more recently, the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, Superintendent of Documents (1996).

Evidence that the health of the nation's youth required immediate attention was so compelling that no fewer than 46 professional organizations and societies have subsequently issued position statements regarding necessary actions to enhance the physical health of children. Youth sports are conspicuous by their mention in 16 of the 32 pronouncements in the last 10

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years. (See Appendix C for a list of organizations and titles of their position statements.) The most direct and far-reaching of these pronouncements was contained in the document *Healthy Children 2000,* which addressed the activity needs of school-aged children. Portions of *Healthy Children 2000* are excerpted from the document to convey the importance that Surgeon General Richmond placed on the health-related potential of physical activity. Thus, the inclusion of youth sports as a significant influence on the physical and psychological health of children and youth is based upon three rationales: (1) the *direct health benefits rationale,* (2) the *positive skill-building rationale* and (3) the *replacement rationale.* Each of the rationales will be discussed in the following sections.

Healthy Children 2000[*]

1.3 Increase to at least 30 percent the proportion of people aged 7 and older who engage regularly, preferably daily, in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day.

Appropriate exercises include continuous rhythmic activities requiring involvement of large muscle groups. Examples are walking, swimming, skating, dancing and children's active games. Light to moderate intensity in children/youth is equivalent to heart rates of approximately 100-120 beats per minute during the activity session.

1.4 Increase to at least 20 percent the proportion of people aged 18 and older and to at least 75 percent the proportion of children and adolescents aged 6 through 17 who engage in vigorous physical activity that promotes the development and maintenance of cardiorespiratory fitness 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion.

Activities that qualify for this category are similar to those previously mentioned. Vigorous exercise intensity is defined for most children/youth as a sustained heart rate of at least 120 beats per minute during continuous exercise sessions.

1.5 Reduce to no more than 15 percent the proportion of people aged 6 and older who engage in no leisure-time physical activity.

1.6 Increase to at least 40 percent the proportion of people aged 6 and older who regularly perform physical activities that enhance and maintain muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility.

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[*] Excerpted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1991). Healthy Children 2000 (pp. 10-16). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service.

Engaging in a variety of physical activities involving many different muscle groups will help the individual maintain and develop muscular fitness. Flexibility improves with regular physical activity and may be enhanced even further when a youngster participates in a regular program of stretching exercises.

1.7 Increase to at least 50 percent the proportion of overweight people aged 12 and older who have adopted sound dietary practices combined with regular physical activity to attain an appropriate body weight.

1.8 Increase to at least 50 percent the proportion of children and adolescents in first through twelfth grade who participate in daily school physical education.

1.9 Increase to at least 50 percent the proportion of school physical education class time that students spend being physically active, preferably engaged in lifetime physical activities.

The Direct Health Benefits Rationale

There is undisputed evidence that physical activity is positively related to the short-term control of childhood *obesity* (Klesges et al, 1990; Ward & Bar-Or, 1986; Wolf et al, 1993), *elevated blood pressure* (Hagberg, 1990; Hofman et al, 1987), *high density lipoproteins* (Sasaki et al, 1987) and *blood lipid levels* (Bell et al, 1989; Newman, Freedman & Voors, 1986; Thorland & Gilliam, 1985). Thus, the relationship between physical activity and physical health has been firmly established within certain environments. The degree to which these benefits accrue through participation in youth sports depends on the kinds and amounts of activity that are inherent in each sport and the quality of the adult leadership controlling the actions of the young participants.

The relationship between physical activity and physical health is firmly established.

Recent re-definitions of health-related physical fitness (Bouchard et al, 1994) place youth sports in the forefront of programs that are able to deliver the desirable sought-after outcomes related to physical fitness. Previous definitions of physical fitness, necessitating vigorous amounts of aerobic exercise for sustained periods of time in order to derive the health-related benefits have recently been replaced in lieu of a definition that acknowledges the benefits of moderate bouts of interrupted activities; a definition that is more in harmony with the patterns of play and sports of children and youth. The newly identified role for youth sports in the promotion of health-related fitness is timely; recent projections suggest that

250,000 deaths annually in the United States are attributable to lack of regular physical activity (12 percent of the total) (Hahn et al, 1986; McGinnis & Foege, 1993), and that up to 50 percent of North American children will eventually die of coronary artery disease (Williams, 1993) because of obesity, high blood pressure and elevated serum cholesterol levels that are already present at 5-6 years of age in some children (Chandra, 1992).

There is ample evidence that many of the precursors to unhealthy lifestyles have their genesis in childhood (McGinnis, 1992). Such behaviors as poor dietary habits and television viewing that may lead to patterns of inactivity are well established by adolescence. This early formation of lifelong habits indicates that any attempts at intervention must begin during the elementary school years when children are learning motor skills and are becoming socialized into sports. Parents and coaches of young athletes must be aware that positive experiences in sports may be the stimulus for a lifetime of physical activity. The newly-expanded role of youth sports has always been present, but now it is receiving the national attention and credit that youth sports programs, properly administrated, have deserved for some time.

The Positive Skill-Building Rationale

Structured activities led by qualified adults are the mainstay of sports education during childhood and adolescence (Humphrey, 1993; Seefeldt, 1986). The current structure of sports for children in the United States incorporates this model to the extreme, with little opportunity for children to organize their own competition or for spontaneous "pick-up" games to erupt in neighborhoods. In its ideal implementation, the adult domination of children's sports has much to recommend it. Adults who are qualified to coach and act as mentors can also serve as role models, counselors and guardians of play spaces. In such situations, learning the physical skills of a particular sport may have greater short-term than long-term importance, because physical skill-building may be ancillary to the social skills that can be taught by a competent instructor. Certainly the ability to work as a member of a team, to learn to resolve conflicts without violence, to sustain relationships through good and bad times and to remain loyal to a cause are more likely to have life-long implications than learning the motor skills of a specific-sport unless the sport itself has life-long implications.

Sports may provide adult contacts and peer associations that are positive.

In ideal settings, membership on a team fills the young individual's need for affiliation. Strategies to eliminate or reduce the influence of gangs have recently found that substituting memberships on sports teams for memberships in gangs is a way for adolescents to congregate in a positive environment (Sokol, 1994; Taylor, 1994). Such arrangements not only displace the potentially negative consequences of unsupervised activities, but offer positive educational, physical and psychological benefits to the participants.

The Replacement Rationale

Recent scrutiny of the typical day of children and youth reveals that up to 40 percent of their time is available to their own discretion (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1990). Socio-economic constraints have placed many youth in environments during these non-school hours without adult supervision. Reduction in recreational services and lack of access to school facilities during the non-school hours (Rauner et al, 1994; Seefeldt, 1995; Tyler, 1991) in many communities are viewed as contributory factors to the socially unacceptable behaviors that occur between the end of the school day and the time when adult supervision is available in the home.

Youth sports programs provide much more than competition.

Three inherent qualities of youth sports—namely, *proficiency in motor skills, enjoyment* and *affiliation with peers* provide a natural link between the youth and their discretionary time (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1989; Harter, 1983). Sponsors of youth sports programs have historically viewed their activities as providing much more than an opportunity for competitive expression. Today these additional attributes seem much more important than ever, because they replace many of the functions that were formerly provided by the family.

Injuries and Injury Prevention

A major cause of continuing concern and careful assessment of psychological stress in children's sports is that we have a situation in which our most susceptible athletes are often being handled by our least trained coaches.

Lyle Micheli, M.D.
Sports injuries in the young athlete: Questions and controversies,
Pediatric and Adolescent Sports Medicine, p. 3, 1984.

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Although highly organized sports for children are now in their fifth decade (Berryman, 1996), we are just beginning to study the epidemiology of injuries suffered by the young athletes. A primary difference between athletic injuries to children and adults is that when children are injured in intense competition, the motivation for the intensity and duration of the competition was probably provided by adults. Another important consideration about adult-supervised sports competition of children is that children are unable, generally, to assess the risks involved in compulsory activities, including highly repetitive actions such as throwing a baseball, performing a swimming stroke, running long distances or practicing tennis for hours per day in a year-around program. Additionally, sports injuries to children are complicated by the variables of growth and maturation, two components that are of little consequence when injuries occur to adults

Injuries to young athletes should be recorded and assessed through a systematic system of surveillance.

Injury rates in competitive sports increase significantly from preadolescent, to junior high school, to the interscholastic level. Thus, injuries are directly related to the ability of the athlete to apply force, either to propel his/her body or to propel an object. Both the generation of force and the dissipation of force are potential causes of injury.

The "overuse injury" in children's sports has appeared during the 1970s (Micheli, 1983), being absent from the medical literature prior to that time. Overuse injuries are caused by repeated application of the same stressor; they manifest themselves when the stress is applied at a rate that is greater than the body's ability to recover from it. Such injuries are believed to be a direct reflection of the increased intensity and duration that has been associated with recent training programs for young athletes. On a national level it is common for sports such as figure skating, gymnastics, ballet, swimming and wrestling to require their enrollees to continue on a year-around basis. Supportive activities such as weight training and aerobic running are often prescribed on days when the sport skills are not being practiced. Thus, overuse injuries, including stress fractures of growing bones, have become a frequent problem for young athletes (Backx et al., 1991; Barnett, 1985; Garrick, 1988).

Growth and Maturation

> *There is little reason to believe that the demands of competitive sports in any way adversely affect the physical growth of the young athlete. Only when the physical activity is sufficiently strenuous and repeated often enough to bring about chronic fatigue or when stressful enough to induce trauma to a body part is there danger of adverse effects on normal growth.*
>
> G. L. Rarick
>
> Competitive sports in childhood and adolescence.
> In G. L. Rarick (1973), Physical Activity: Human Growth and Development, (p 372).

The courageous assessment by Rarick (1973) at a time when the medical and educational establishments were generally opposed to athletic competition for children, has stood the test of time. In a comprehensive review of the literature, Malina and Bouchard (1991) nearly two decades later corroborated Rarick's assessment concerning the influence of physical activity on growth and maturation.

Specialists of human growth and development have known for some time that certain amounts of weight-bearing activity are necessary to stimulate bone growth in healthy children. Because the data from which this principle was formulated were obtained under the reverse of these conditions; namely, bone depletion as a result of bed rest, scientists are not sure just how much stimulation is necessary for healthy skeletal development (Rowland, 1990). In youth sports, the pertinent questions have been, "How much stimulation of specific kinds and amounts is too much? When does stimulation exceed the body's ability to recover from bouts of repetitious activity?" These questions have become more pertinent as larger numbers of growing athletes are subjected to intense training programs at younger ages and for long durations.

Although growth and maturation are regulated by one's genetic make-up, these constructs must be considered within the biocultural environment in which the athlete resides and performs (Malina, 1996). Among the variables that determine the rates of growth and development within the individual's genotype are socio-economic status, family size, diet, emotional state, overall health and the intensity and duration of physical activity and training. These

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variables must be applied to any interpretation of potential interference in growth or delay in maturation as the result of specific activity.

A detailed analysis by Malina (1996) of the various athletes from specific sports led him to the conclusion that, although delayed growth and maturation of athletes may be associated with specific sports, e.g., shorter than average stature in male figure skating, these delays are attributable to a selection factor that is in progress during the entire time that the athlete is preparing for high levels of competition. Thus, activity is able to enhance growth, but not maturation, and activity is unlikely to retard either physical growth or biological maturation under any other than extreme environments.

Athletes and Substance Abuse

Use of illegal substances for recreational purposes has been a major concern of parents and educators since *street drugs* became popular in the late 1960s. Because of their visibility in local communities, a subgroup of adolescents—athletes—have been implicated in the use of performance enhancing drugs such as anabolic steroids and amphetamines. Several questions regarding the use of drugs in connection with organized sports are pertinent. (1) Do athletes and non-athletes differ in their frequency and intensity of drug use? (2) Are sports an effective means to counteract the use of drugs among adolescents?

There are few data regarding the use of drugs by individuals in interscholastic or agency-sponsored athletics. Shields (1995) reported that the use of drugs by athletes was significantly less than their use by non-athletes in an interscholastic setting. However, drug use was reported by athletic directors (coaches) rather than having the athletes report their own experiences. The lower estimate of drug use by athletes was confirmed irrespective of school size, geographical region of the state, household income, racial/ethnic composition of the sample, or the type of drug used. The author suggested that broadening the inclusion of the student body in sports programs would be an economical way to curtail the use of illegal drugs at the high school level.

Successful use of physical activity as a strategy for intervening in the habits of adolescents who were in a treatment program proved to be successful (Collingwood et al, 1991). Individuals who made the greatest gains in fitness scores also self-reported the greatest decrease in substance

use patterns. The authors recommended physical training as a supplement to the intervention already in place for adolescent substance abusers.

Another strategy for intervention involves having athletes from the professional and intercollegiate ranks work with high school students in a goal-setting program. High school students were educated through an in-service program and they, in turn, conducted sessions with middle school students. The Richmond, Virginia-based program did not report results at the time of the referenced publication, but the agenda contained the types of self-help skills that should prove helpful in any kind of learning environment. Goal setting, identifying barriers to success, learning problem-solving skills and enhancing self-confidence were the skills to be attained through the assistance of athletes.

Summary and Conclusions

Societal problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle and unacceptable behavior by children and youth have thrust youth sports into the limelight as the most likely vehicle for prevention of and intervention in socially unacceptable behavior. The new definition of physical fitness, which acknowledges the benefits of moderate bouts of interrupted activity is compatible with many of the activity patterns in children's play and their participation in organized sports. Promoters of youth sports face two dilemmas; to persuade the sedentary children to assume a more active lifestyle and to diminish the enthusiasm of overzealous coaches who fail to recognize the limitations of physiological and psychological stress that can be tolerated by the body of a developing child.

The increase of injuries in youth sports is attributable to (1) greater numbers of participants, (2) more intense and longer sports seasons and (3) lack of qualified coaches at all levels from novice through the interscholastic ranks. Estimates place the number of avoidable injuries in youth sports at 50 percent (Micheli, 1983).

There is no conclusive evidence that the current practices in youth sports impede physical growth or biological maturation. Differences noted as stereotypes in certain sports are likely to be a function of the selection process. The biocultural interpretation of data pertaining to the growth and development of young athletes is encouraged.

The Changing National Scene in Youth Sports

The important question for parents should not be whether organized sports are good or not, but whether a particular game, team or coach is good for their preadolescent at any particular stage of his or her development.

James Comer, M.D.
Organized sport for the preadolescent, Parents, 54(92), 1979.

The increasing popularity of youth sports indicates that each year a significant number of parents believe that the inherent values of sport outweigh its detrimental effects. The constant controversy that has swirled throughout sports at the youth, interscholastic and intercollegiate levels does not seem to dampen the enthusiasm of millions of parents who annually enroll their children in sports.

The irony of the present situation in youth sports is that without actually intending to do so, sport has come full circle from its beginnings in the earlier part of the 20th century. Youth sports were, initially, a part of the after-school curriculum of elementary schools (Berryman, 1996). However, numerous problems not unlike those of the present situation, drove the programs from the schools. The withdrawal of support for athletics at the elementary school level by public school educators in the 1920s has had a lasting influence on youth sports programs. The aversion to elementary school athletics by many educators today can be traced to the undesirable experiences of eight decades ago.

Denied access to space within the schools, the youth sports programs moved into the communities, where such family-oriented organizations as Turners, Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCAs and local service clubs continued to conduct the programs. However, then as now, the sports programs were conducted by adults who had little knowledge of the special competencies needed by coaches or the special needs of the growing athletes, while the physical education teachers and coaches in the schools concentrated on the

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interscholastic programs and ignored the community agency-sponsored programs.

The aversion of public school personnel to the community-based sports programs that sprang up to replace the elementary school athletic programs led to a growing animosity between the two groups. At frequent intervals the American Medical Association and the National Education Association issued policy statements that opposed organized sports below the ninth grade. Despite these unsolicited documents of advice, the community-based programs continued to grow, especially after World War II when many agency-sponsored programs with national affiliations joined the family-based programs to support organized athletics for children. It became clear that youth sports were part of the American culture despite the earlier condemnations of the medical and educational professions.

The early 1970s brought about a change in the attitudes of physicians, physical educators and school administrators. The reconciliation between the opposing forces occurred in Washington, D.C. in 1977 and resulted in two publications; namely, Youth Sports Guide for Coaches and Parents (Thomas, 1977) and Guidelines for Children's Sports (Martens & Seefeldt, 1979). The two groups agreed that athletic competition for children had become an enduring part of the American culture. From now on the protagonists and antagonists would work together for more desirable conditions under which the practices and contests in youth sports would be conducted.

Significant Changes in Youth Sports

Scientific Basis for Practice

Much of the criticism of youth sports programs arose because their growth clearly outstripped the ability of researchers to provide solutions to the many problems that occurred when children were placed in intensive athletic competition. Prior to the 1980s men and women had been the subjects of scientists who studied the effects of physiological and psychological stresses produced by intensive physical activity. The entry of children and adolescents into the arena brought with it a new set of problems, because the process of growing to physical maturity, itself, provided a stressor. The gratifying response from the scientific community is that

specialists from various sub-disciplines, including exercise physiology, sport sociology and psychology, growth and motor development and sports medicine have all embraced the young athlete as a legitimate subject for study. The projected results of this scientific scrutiny have eventually found its way into the policies, guidelines and recommendations that govern the participation of children and youth in organized athletic competition. The mistakes of the past, which essentially treated children and youth as though they were adults, have given way to the realization that the adult model of athletic competition should not be imposed on young performers.

Sports as an Alternative to Socially-Undesirable Behavior

Athletic competition is popularly seen as an alternative to undesirable behavior.

Youth sports were initially implemented in the elementary schools of New York City in an attempt to curb juvenile delinquency (Berryman, 1996). After approximately eighty years, the concept of using sports as a positive alternative to socially undesirable behavior is being revived, primarily because of the negative experiences in urban cities where funding for sports and recreation by municipal governments has been drastically reduced. Although sports are not viewed as a panacea for society's ills, athletic competition that emphasizes skill-building and socially-acceptable responses to personal relations has proven to be a popular aid in the education of youth. Critics have contended that the success of sports-oriented educational programs is based solely on testimony rather than scientific evidence, but the mere engagement of youth in sports activities, in lieu of numerous other self-directed activities, provides a diversion that appears to be a constructive alternative to non-supervised behavior. As the experiential evidence of sports-oriented educational programs accumulates into a sound research base, the refinement will reveal a formula for education, citizenship and physical activity that meets the developmental needs of youth.

Sports as Health

New definitions of health-related physical fitness and the sedentary lifestyles of American youth, especially residents in urban cities, has identified sports as the purveyor of an additional benefit—physical fitness. Although sports have historically been viewed as the source for learning fundamental movement skills (Michigan Joint Legislative Study on Youth Sports, 1978; Malina, 1995), the additional responsibility of promoting

fitness does not pose an undue burden; it merely gives credit to sports for an outcome that was present all along. However, the publicity about the additional role of sports in physical fitness is likely to bring additional pressures from parents for membership on sports teams and playing time for their children.

The consequences of having youth sports assume the responsibility for fundamental skill development **and** physical fitness may result in an unwanted consequence; namely, the further erosion of the school-based physical education programs. In times of dire need, the options should not include selection of one or the other, but a realization that if sports and physical education programs promote their symbiotic relationship, their mutual clients, the children and youth will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

Mandated Education of Coaches

There is common agreement that the quality of a child's experience in youth sports is primarily determined by the competence of the coach. Unfortunately, an estimated 90 percent (Partlow, 1995) of youth sports coaches do not have the essential skills that are prerequisites to coaching young athletes. Despite the availability of educational programs for coaches, the proportion of qualified coaches in youth sports remains low, in part because the turnover rate is estimated to be 50 percent per year. Even in the best of circumstances, educating over one million coaches annually would be a formidable task, primarily because there is currently no nationally-based certifying or accrediting structure available to accomplish this task, nor are sufficient programs of coaches education available on a geographical basis.

Few youth sports coaches currently have any formal preparation for coaches. The National Standards for Athletic Coaches may change the perception of competence and level of expertise associated with coaching youth sports.

Three recent developments have the potential to change the long-standing status quo of coaches' level of preparedness: (1) a litigious society is now turning on youth sports coaches for alleged negligence during practices and games; (2) National Standards for Athletic Coaches (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 1995) are now available and have been distributed nationally (see Appendix B); and (3) computer-assisted instruction will provide greater accessibility to programs. The National Standards describe the competencies that are to be achieved by coaches within five levels of development, ranging from the novice coach to the Olympic level coach. The definition of competencies that coaches at each level of competition should possess may be the stimulus for increased

education and mandated certification of coaches by their respective parent organizations. Computer-assisted instruction for educational programs that lead to certification of athletic coaches is only in its infancy, but the structure for such instruction is in place and is being implemented by numerous academic institutions at the present time. The ability to provide self-paced instruction and assessment for an increasingly computer-literate group of coaches may provide the accommodations that are needed to educate America's youth sports coaches.

Youth Sports in Urban Cities

There is ample evidence that despite the phenomenal growth of youth sports, the children and youth in America's inner cities are underserved regarding their opportunity to participate in sports (Seefeldt, 1995; Tyler, 1991). Attempts by professional sports teams and sports figures to stimulate youth sports in urban areas are too numerous to mention, but examples of some successful ventures include Itty-Bitty Basketball by the National Basketball Association, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) sponsored by the National and American Baseball Leagues, U.S.A. Hockey by the National Governing Body of the United States Olympic Committee and Youth Soccer by the United States Youth Soccer Association and the American Youth Soccer Association.

Although the sponsorship of youth sports programs by professional organizations and players is to be commended, these efforts often fall short of their publicity because the local effort that is needed to nourish and sustain such programs is not in place. Experience has documented that the following supportive structure is needed for such ventures to be successful, rather than having ill-advised local ventures become another source of disillusionment for the young athletes. The seven essential components for a successful youth sports program include the following.

Seven Essential Components of a Successful Youth Sports Program

1. *A philosophy that promotes and protects the interests and welfare of children and youth.* The philosophy must promote enjoyable, fair and safe participation for children and youth of all levels of ability.

2. *Clearly stated goals.* The goals must reflect the values held by the community and be realistic in terms of achievement by the participants.

3. *A well-defined organizational structure.* The organization must be guided by written by-laws and clearly defined lines of responsibility for all professional staff and volunteers.

4. *A clearly-defined program.* The program must be directly linked to the philosophy and program goals so that proper growth and development of the participants is ensured.

5. *Effective procedures for implementing the program.* Written procedures include policies, expected outcomes, evaluations, emergencies, recruitment of volunteers and implementation of all programs.

6. *Evaluation of all phases of the program.* An annual review of the goals, procedures of implementation, outcomes, expenditure of funds and program responsibilities is essential if the program is to improve from year to year.

7. *Well-defined expectations of success.* Indicators of success include participation and drop-out rates, mastery of program content, involvement by the community and financial security.

The public and private sectors must cooperate to give youth sports a stable base.

The sponsorship of youth sports in urban cities must extend far beyond the goodwill of professional teams and their players. At best, these efforts are exclusionary, existing generally in cities where the professional leagues have teams. The expansion of youth sports to every urban city requires that the public and private sectors cooperate to provide a stable base for the long-term support of programs. Such a step was taken recently by the Skillman Foundation of Detroit when the Foundation established and funded a 15-member Commission for Youth Sports and Recreation. The Commission will function "to plan, develop, implement and coordinate recreational and leisure activities for youth in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park" (Skillman Foundation News Update, 1995). Such commissions, working to coordinate the efforts of sponsors in both the private and public sector, could provide the stability and collaboration that is needed to implement and sustain youth sports in urban cities.

Injuries and Protective Equipment

Despite the considerable literature devoted to the sports injuries of children and youth (eighteen professional organizations have issued position statements in the last 10 years on this topic) there is no surveillance system to document the epidemiology of the injuries for young athletes. Isolated studies have recorded the incidence and frequency of injuries in some sports, but the methodology of data collection and reporting is so fragmented that a systematic analysis and recommendations for change are speculative (Caine, D., Caine, C., & Lindner, 1996).

Injury prevention and collecting data about injuries are important in youth sports.

At this time equipment manufacturers have anticipated the needs of children and youth regarding safety, only to be rebuffed by rules committees who (1) await additional confirming evidence that the equipment will promote greater safety or (2) are concerned that the equipment will alter the traditional nature of the sport. A case in point is youth league baseball, where such safety features as low-compression balls, visors on batting helmets, protective helmets on defensive players, the double-first base and protective vests for batters are not required and, in the situation of the softer baseballs, actually prohibited in sanctioned tournament play although they may have been used throughout the season by teams who will eventually play in the tournaments (Medford & Kyle, 1996).

The problem of youth sports injuries has recently stimulated representatives from the Consumer Products Safety Commission and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct national forums on this topic (Medford & Kyle, 1996). Future developments should include establishment of a surveillance system to record injuries in youth sports, and recommendations for actions to be taken to prevent or reduce the estimated 50 percent of youth sports injuries that could be avoided by better coaching and supervision (Micheli, 1983).

Two Levels of Competition

Highly-competitive and recreational programs are both needed.

The competition between *highly competitive* and *recreational* leagues will likely intensify because of the increased popularity of intercity, interstate and national competition for highly skilled children as young as six years of age. Formerly, the recruiting of the most highly skilled players was confined to agency-sponsored sports, but recently this desire for highly competitive play has resulted in the formulation of rival leagues at the high school level,

too. The appeal of the agency-sponsored leagues as competitors for talent at the high school level is their lack of restriction on games per season, number of practices, travel and regard for the amateur status of the athletes. Interscholastic sports programs will have to emphasize the educational components of athletics if they are to withstand and counteract the appeal of the agency-sponsored programs

At the elementary and middle school level the justification for two levels of competition generally involves equality of competition. Athletes who are so skillful that they dominate play at the expense of their less-talented peers should be moved to teams with players of equal ability, size, maturity and experience. Concomitantly, the players who are still perfecting their skills are then able to play in an environment where skill development, in lieu of competition, is stressed.

Coaching as a Male-Dominated Profession

Ways of attracting women to coaching must be developed.

Despite efforts to the contrary, the proportion of female-to-male coaches for girls sports is decreasing. Societal factors may contribute to this imbalance; nearly one-half of America's young children are raised in one-parent families, most frequently by the mother. The burdens of a single parent may be so overwhelming that the additional time needed to coach a team may be out of the question. Yet, if young girls are to receive the encouragement and reinforcement needed as early learners, they must receive instruction from female coaches. The perplexing problem of recruiting women as coaches remains an issue of the highest priority in sports for girls and women. The enactment of Title IX does not seem to have affected the number of women who are **willing** to coach, despite the large numbers who had interscholastic experience since 1972. Contributing to the lack of enthusiasm for women to become coaches may be the fact that women are uncomfortable in adopting the "male mentality' which is purported to be necessary to be an effective coach.

Increased Roles for Volunteers

Volunteers have important roles to play in youth sports.

Financial constraints on budgets at the municipal and public school levels indicate that support for agency-sponsored and interscholastic sports is not likely to increase during the latter part of the twentieth century. The most effective way to provide services and reduce costs is to rely on volunteers.

Dependence on volunteers often creates a new set of problems, foremost among them is to provide educational programs for the continued in-service of workers. The threat of lawsuits resulting from injuries, negligence or psychological stress mandates that agencies require certain levels of certification from volunteers. Agencies will also have to spend more time on evaluation, job satisfaction and rewards for services as the proportion of volunteers to salaried staff increases. The task of attending to the needs and concerns of a volunteer work force will require a greater commitment from sponsors of youth sports programs in the years ahead.

Summary and Conclusions

Changes in the economic and social structure of America have placed new expectations and responsibilities on the promoters of youth sports programs. Coaches are serving the roles of substitute parents, counselors and teachers. Many municipalities are now expecting volunteers to perform the duties for which they once employed salaried staff. Parents and the medical profession often expect youth sports to provide the fitness that was once the domain of the physical education teacher. Coaches are currently expected to possess sufficient competence to teach the skills of the sport, know the rules and perform unexpected functions such as first aid and life saving skills without negligence. Clearly, the avocation of the youth sports coach has changed from the time when a parent could go to the park with a team and engage in a low-key afternoon of play.

The current momentum of highly organized sports for children and youth is a clear indication that the trend for more intense competition at younger ages will continue. Parents, teachers and coaches must ensure that the values, knowledge and skill that are commensurate with sound child development survives this impulse to engage children in highly organized athletic competition, especially if winning transcends all other potential values of youth sports.

Summary and Recommendations

> Youth sports and recreation programs should be part of an overall prevention strategy. Well-designed programs should address risk factors that may lead to truancy, school dropout, academic underachievement, juvenile crime and violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, gang-related and anti-social behavior.
>
> Recreating Recreation.
> A Special Report of the Skillman Foundation.
> Detroit, Michigan, 1995.

Summary

Sports for children and youth are deeply entrenched in American culture. Each year approximately 38 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 8 years are involved in at least one organized sporting experience. Approximately 6 million of the these young athletes participate at the interscholastic level, while the majority are involved in agency-sponsored sports under the auspices of local municipalities, generally within departments of recreation or with independent organizations that are affiliated nationally.

The values that promoters of youth sports have attributed to participation in athletics are abundant and impressive. They include such generic qualities as social competence, moral integrity, respect for laws, emotional stability under stress and ability to accept constructive criticism. Such promises persuade a new generation of parents to annually enroll their children in youth sports at the local level, with numerous possibilities available to those who graduate to the level of highly skilled performers.

Despite the impressive figures of enrollment in youth sports programs, athletic competition for children and youth has been surrounded by controversy since its inception in the middle 1950s. Criticisms include: a tendency to be exclusive rather than inclusive, to emphasize elitism rather than espousing a philosophy that "everyone plays," a preference to serve suburban youth in lieu of the more difficult challenges posed by sports in urban cities and the neglect of girls and all persons with handicapping

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conditions. Perhaps most universally criticized of all is the quality of the adult leadership associated with youth sports; most specifically, the coaches within these organizations.

Barriers to participation in youth sports are nearly as abundant as its list of attributes. The unacceptable high drop out rate, estimated to be from 50 to 75 percent during an individual's career as a one-sport participation, points to numerous reasons for dissatisfaction. Youth who are difficult to serve are routinely underserved; girls enroll at later ages and drop out more frequently than boys, especially in the face of co-ed competition. Nine of ten coaches at the agency-sponsored sports level are males, thus depriving many girls of the role models they need at early ages and perhaps of the nurturing that is essential to beginning-level participants. Personal safety when traveling to and from sports sites is a major problem in many urban cities, primarily because many local neighborhoods have ceased to function as communities. The cooperative care of children and youth must become a high priority if sites and facilities in urban cities are to once again become safe havens for youth.

Research has demonstrated that youth sports are a value-neutral experience. They can become highly positive under the guidance and supervision of competent adults and, conversely, negative results appear just as readily when unqualified persons exploit children for selfish purposes. However, in their positive formats the programs have the potential to teach fundamental movement skills, moral development, non-violent resolution of conflicts, problem solving and health-related behaviors.

Recent developments, including drastic decreases in funding for sports and recreation in urban settings, have placed new responsibilities on the promoters of youth sports. Studies have reported that the appeal and gratification of gang membership is similar to the needs that were once met in urban America by the now nearly non-existent youth sports. A return to the former positive membership on sports teams is seen as a desirable alternative, but the implementation of programs on a large scale lags far behind such proposals for action.

The health of adolescent youth in America is of special concern as emphasized by the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health (1996) . Aside from the devastating effects of substance abuse, violence and promiscuous sexual practices, a large proportion of youth in all environments

have developed a sedentary lifestyle that is the precursor to numerous chronic diseases of middle and late adulthood. Sports provide both the opportunity and the environment for adults to teach children the habits and knowledge that will serve them well as active, educated adults.

Recent publications regarding the plight of adolescents in American society have resulted in the numerous multidisciplinary studies of this age group. More specifically, physical activity and sports seem to have generated great attention. Whether youth sports are able to rise to the level of expectations regarding their roles in physical and emotional health and as an alternative to self-destructive behavior will depend on changes that must occur at the adult levels of children's sports. The following recommendations are proposed as solutions that should be attempted through the implementation of community-based youth sports programs.

Recommendations

1. **Programs must be designed so that they revitalize communities as partners in the delivery of sports programs.**

   The "top-down" model of administration and provision of services in many sports programs has alienated local citizens. Each community must become involved in planning and implementing programs. Volunteers serve many roles besides coaching; they provide stability, protection, advocacy and funding for youth sports programs.

2. **Public policymakers must become educated about the significance of youth sports in the non-school lives of youth. Dedicated revenues for sports programs are an uncommon, but necessary, means to avoid the fluctuations in funding by private and public funders.**

   The erosion of public respect and trust seems to have accompanied public financial support of sports programs. Education and advocacy must use a "bottoms-up" approach to community involvement. Communication regarding the availability, benefits and stability of programmatic efforts must become a high priority.

3. **Programs must rely on local citizens as volunteers who are empowered to plan, implement and evaluate the sports programs in their community.**

Volunteers are generally underutilized, especially in urban areas. To have credibility within a community, the sports programs must be sanctioned by local residents. Good professional leadership is even more essential when volunteers play a major role in the provision of services. Volunteers must be continuously recruited, educated, evaluated and rewarded for their services.

4. **Communities must improve the condition and maintenance of facilities and sites so that they are attractive and safe for children and families.**

Fear of harm is one of the greatest deterrents to participation in sports. Security and surveillance must be in place so that delinquency and crime are reported and eliminated. Program providers should work with local police to establish a system of reporting and responding to unwanted behaviors. Reallocation of the community resources may be necessary to achieve this objective.

5. **A broad-based organization that unites the public/private sector of a city should be established to plan, develop, coordinate, maintain and evaluate the municipality's comprehensive youth sports program.**

Providers of programs that represent the public and private sectors must begin to coordinate their services so that redundancies and omissions are kept to a minimum. The fragmentation of programs and the duplication in requests for funding are counter-productive to sports programs. A visionary and prestigious group of citizens who function for the public good can eliminate many of the problems that result from an uncoordinated effort.

6. **Children should be exposed to a broad array of sport opportunities during their elementary years.**

Because young children rely so heavily on social comparison in determining their self-esteem and competence, children should be exposed to a broad array of sport opportunities so that they can develop many competencies before being asked to specialize. This will allow children to explore sport skills and tasks that are very different and to find a match with their physical attributes and interests.

7. **Early childhood involvement in sport should emphasize instruction more than competition.**

Children do not understand, or enjoy, competition until they have developed sufficient skill with which to compete. During the ages of 6 to 12 years children are developing a cognitive understanding of complex concepts such as the difference between ability, task difficulty and effort, offensive and defensive strategies, and the fact that losing does not mean failure. Thus, children should focus on skill development during this age range in order to attain the positive psychological, social and emotional outcomes that they deserve through their sport experience.

8. **Sport programs must reevaluate their programs and institute equitable programs that will meet the needs of all youth.**

Sport organizations must work with communities to determine the needs of the youth. In many communities, it would be in the best interest to connect youth sport opportunities to education. Parents do not want their children to believe that success as an adult is limited to a professional sport career. Educational goals can be enhanced through providing sport opportunities to youth and to use sport to teach such skills as conflict resolution, nutrition, and interpersonal skills.

9. **Coaches must be encouraged to teach children responsibility, independence and leadership so that they are better prepared for everyday life.**

Sport and education must develop the whole child and teach children to take responsibility for their behaviors. Many anti-social behaviors could be prevented if athletes were taught responsibility, independence and leadership. Sport must teach these skills equally to boys and girls and to youth of all races.

10. **Sport organizations can provide an alternative to gang membership and violence by providing opportunities for more youth to be involved and thereby benefit from being a member of a prosocial team.**

Sport teams can provide affiliation, companionship, role identity, enhanced self-worth, and increased acceptance of responsibility with proper adult leadership. Many adolescents are denied participation in sport during the early adolescent years. This occurs when communities fail to provide sport programs for junior and high school students. Sport organizations need to work with schools and communities to increase the number of sport opportunities for youth during this critical age.

11. **Sport organizations need to provide opportunities for youth of varying skill levels.**

Self-esteem and perceived competence in sport result from learning sport skills that are commensurate with one's own abilities and favorable comparisons of one's skills with other youth. During the formative years of sport skill development, youth can often misunderstand the results of sport competition relative to their own ability. Adult intervention is essential for youth to understand that they will get better with more practice or when they grow and mature. As youth are differentiated by their abilities, separate, but flexible, sport opportunities should be provided for the continued development of skill, perceived competence and self-esteem.

12. **Sport organizations should provide educational programs for all coaches of youth sport teams.**

Coaches play a vital role in the development of self-esteem and perceptions of competence of youth sport participants. Coaches need to understand the effective use of feedback, that feedback may vary with gender, and how children of different ages interpret feedback. In addition, the education of coaches should involve understanding the competitive process, including the cooperative nature of sport and the individual nature of roles within a cooperative sport. Moral understanding and moral action as a part of sport must be taught and understood by coaches so that children can learn these lessons through their sport experience.

13. **Sport organizations must screen adults who volunteer to coach youth and select those adults who can serve as positive role models in the demonstration of fair play, sportsmanship, integrity and compassion. In addition, coaches must be able to teach and help children understand why these behaviors are desirable.**

Children must learn that playing outside the rules is inappropriate even if it results in winning. Because moral understanding is a function of moral cognitions, coaches must teach children why certain actions are right or wrong. This understanding will facilitate the moral cognitions that mediate self-regulatory behavior. Sport provides one of the best arenas for teaching self-regulatory behavior in a socially supportive environment.

14. **Sport organizations should provide education to parents about the roles of parents of youth sport participants, the use of appropriate feedback and the positive and potentially negative aspects of participation in sport.**

The feedback from parents, both verbal and nonverbal, influences how children interpret their sport experiences. Parents often walk a fine line between support and pressure. Trial and error can result in an extremely negative experience for the child, which can lead to the loss of motivation to continue in sport or in an aversion to

active lifestyles when the child becomes an adult. Parents should also be educated about the nutritional needs of youth sport participants.

15. **Sport organizations should make a commitment to increasing the number of women and minority coaches in youth sport programs.**

For sport programs to be more responsive to the needs of a diverse society, sport organizations must become more diverse and the voices of both women and minorities must be heard if sport is to be effective in meeting the needs of more youth. The media must be educated to provide the same positive coverage of athletic events to girls and women that are provided to boys and men. This would send the message that sports is an important arena for girls as well as for boys. In addition, many male coaches fail to value the participation of women in sport except as ways to enhance their feminine qualities. All coaches need to be taught that being skillful, strong and assertive are good qualities for everyone. Young girls and youth of color need to see women coaches and coaches of color as coaches who can serve as role models and mentors.

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Appendices

Nationally Affiliated Organizations that Promote and Sponsor Youth Sports in the United States*

Organization	Address	Phone
All American Amateur Baseball Association	c/o Tom J. Checkush 340 Walker Drive Zanesville, OH 43701	614-453-7349
Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles	2141 West Adams Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90402	213-730-9600
Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU)	AAU House Box 68207 Indianapolis, IN 46268	317-872-2900
Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA)	2801 NE 50th Street Oklahoma City, OK 73111	405-424-5266
Amateur Speed Skating Union of the United States	1033 Shady Lane Glen Ellen, IL 60137	708-790-3230
Amateur Karate Federation	1930 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1208 Los Angeles, CA 90057	213-483-8261
American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA)	815 N. Weber St. Colorado Springs, CO 80903	719-635-5396
American Athletic Association for the Deaf (AAAD)	1052 Darling Street Ogden, UT 84403	801-393-7916
American Bicycle Association	P.O. Box 718 Chandler, AZ 85244	602-961-1903
American Bowling Congress (ABC)	5301 South 76th Street Greendale, WI 53129-0500	414-421-6400
American Junior golf Association	2415 Steeplechase Lane Roswell, GA 30076	404-998-4653
American Legion Baseball	P.O. Box 1055 Indianapolis, IN 46206	317-635-8411
American Running and Fitness Association	4405 East-West Highway, Ste. 405 Bethesda, MD 20814	301-913-9517 800-776-2732
American Ski Federation	207 Constitution Ave. NE Washington, DC 20002	202-543-1595
American Swimming Coaches Association	304 S.E. 20th Street Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316	305-462-6267
American Volleyball Coaches Association	1227 Lake Plaza Dr., Suite B Colorado Springs, CO 80906	719-576-7777
American Youth Soccer Organization	5403 West 138th Street Hawthorne, CA 90250	310-643-6455
Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball	P.O. Box 5000 1770 Brunswick Ave. Trenton, NJ 08638	609-695-1434
Bicycle Federation of America	1818 R Street NW Washington, DC 20009	202-332-6986
Biddy Basketball	4711 Bancroft Drive New Orleans, LA 70122	504-288-5128

* Source: National Youth Sports Foundation for the Prevention of Athletic Injuries, Inc. (1993). Sports source. Needham, MA: NYSFPAI

Organization	Address	Phone
Billiard and Bowling Institute of America	200 Castlewood Drive North Palm Beach, FL 33408	305-842-4100
Boys and Girls International Floor Hockey	124 E. Michigan Battle Creek, MI 49017	616-966-3431
Boys Clubs of America	771 First Avenue New York, NY 10017	212-351-5900
Catholic Youth Organization	1011 First Avenue New York, NY 10022	212-371-1000
Cindarella Softball League, Inc.	P.O. Box 1411 Corning, NY 14830	607-937-5469
Dixie Baseball, Inc.	215 Watauga Lane P.O. Box 222 Lookout Mountain, TN 37350	615-821-6811
Field Hockey Association of America (FHAA)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5764	719-578-4587
Golden Gloves Association of America, Inc.	8801 Princess Jeanne NE Albuquerque, NM 87112	505-888-1176
Ice Skating Institute of America	335 W. Dundee Road Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-3500	708-808-SKAT
International In-Line Skating Association	3033 Excelsior Blvd., Suite 300 Minneapolis, MN 55416-4655	612-924-2348
Lacrosse Foundation, Inc. (The)	113 W. University Pkwy. Baltimore, MD 21210	301-235-6882
Little League Baseball Incorporated	P.O. Box 3485 Williamsport, PA 17701	717-326-1921
National Archery Association (NAA)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5778	719-578-4576
National Association of Police Athletic Leagues	200 Castlewood Dr., Suite 400 North Palm Beach, FL 33408	407-844-1823
National Federation of Interscholastic Coaches Association	11724 Plaza Circle Box 20626 Kansas City, MO 64195	816-464-5400
National Field Archery Association	31407 Outer 1-10 Redlands, CA 92373	909-794-2133
National High School Baseball Coaches Association	P.O. Box 12354 Omaha, NE 68112-0354	402-457-1962
National Junior Tennis League	c/o USTA Center for Education 70 West Red Oak Lane White Plains, NY 10604	212-302-3322
National Skateboard Association	7555 Redbud Road Granite Bay, CA 95661	916-791-3720
National Soccer Coaches Association of America	4220 Shawnee Mission Parkway Suite 105B Fairway, KS 66205	913-362-1747
National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA)	300 Old City Hall Landmark 916 O Street Box 81410 Lincoln, NE 68501	402-472-3000
National Wrestling Coaches Association	University of Utah Coll. of Hlth., Exer. & Sport Sci. Salt Lake City, UT 84112	801-581-3836

Organization	Address	Phone
Police Athletic League (P.A.L.)	200 Castlewood Drive North Palm Beach, FL 33408	407-844-1823
Pony Baseball	P.O. Box 225 Washington, PA 15301	412-225-1060
Pop Warner Football	920 Center Drive, Suite 1-25 Longhorne, PA 19047-1748	215-752-2691
Roller Skating Foundation of America	515 Madison Avenue New York NY 10022	
S.A.Y. Soccer U.S.A. (Soccer Association for Youth)	4903 Vine St. #1 Cincinnati, OH 45217-1252	513-351-7291
Special Olympics	1350 New York Avenue NW Suite 500 Washington, Dc 20005	202-628-3630
US Golf Association	Liberty Corner Road Far Hills, NJ 07931	908-234-2300
US Skiing	P.O. Box 100 Park City, UT 84060	801-649-9090
U.S.A. Amateur Boxing Federation, Inc. (USAABF)	1750 East Boulder Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5776	719-578-4506
USA Baseball	2160 Greenwood Ave. Trenton, NJ 08609	609-586-2381
USA Basketball	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5777	719-632-7687
USA Gymnastics	Pan American Plaza 201 S. Capitol, Suite 300 Indianapolis, IN 46225	317-237-5050
USA Hockey	4965 N. 30th Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80906-4489	719-599-5500
U.S.A. Karate Federation (USAKF)	1300 Kenmore Blvd. Akron, OH 44314	216-753-3114
U.S.A. Wrestling	225 South Academy Blvd. Colorado Sprgs., CO 80910	719-597-8333
United States Association for Blind Athletes	33 North Institute, Brown Hall #015 Colorado Sprgs., CO 80903	719-630-0422
United States Badminton Association (USBA)	One Olympic Plaza, #10, Rm. 126 Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5746	719-578-4808
United States Cross Country Coaches Association	c/o Bill Bergan Iowa State University Ames, IA 50011	515-294-3723
United States Curling Association (USCA)	1100 Centerpoint Drive P.O. Box 866 Stevens Point, WI 54481	715-344-1199
United States Cycling Federation	1750 East Boulder Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909	303-578-4581
United States Diving, Inc. (USD)	Pan American Plaza 201 S. Capitol Avenue, Suite 430 Indianapolis, IN 46225	317-237-5252
United States Fencing Association (USFA)	1750 East Boulder Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5774	719-578-4511

Organization	Address	Phone
United States Field Hockey Association, Inc. (USFHA)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5773	719-578-4567
United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA)	20 First Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80906-3697	719-635-5200
United States International Speedskating Association (USISA)	P.O. Box 16157 Rocky River, OH 44116	216-899-0128
United States Judo, Inc. (USJI)	P.O. Box 10013 El Paso, TX 79991	915-565-8754
United States Powerlifting Federation, Inc.	2103 Langley Avenue P.O. Box 18485 Pensacola, FL 32504	904-477-4863
United States Professional Tennis Association	1 USPTA Centre 3535 Briarpark Drive Houston, TX 77042	713-97USPTA
United States Rowing Association (USRA)	201 S. Capitol Avenue, Suite 400 Indianapolis, IN 46225	317-237-5656
United States Soccer	1801-11 S. Prairie Avenue Chicago, IL 60616	312-808-1300
United States Swimming, Inc. (USS)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5770	719-578-4578
United States Synchronized Swimming, Inc. (USSS)	201 S. Capitol Avenue, Suite 510 Indianapolis, IN 46225	317-237-5700
United States Table Tennis Association (USTTA)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5769	719-578-4583
United States Taekwondo Union (USTU)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5792	719-578-4632
United States Team Handball Federation (USTHF)	One Olympic Plaza Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5768	719-578-4582
United States Tennis Association (USTA)	70 West Red Oak Lane White Plains, NY 10604	212-302-3322
United States Volleyball Association (USVBA)	3595 E. Fountain Blvd. Colorado Sprgs., CO 80910-1740	719-637-8300
United States Water Polo, Inc.	1750 East Boulder Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5765	719-578-4549
United States Weightlifting Federation, Inc.	1750 East Boulder Street Colorado Sprgs., CO 80909-5764	719-578-4508
United States Youth Soccer Association	2050 North Plano, Suite 100 Richardson, TX 75082	214-235-4499
Young American Bowling Alliance	5301 South 76th Street Greendale, WI 53129	414-421-4700
Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of the U.S.A.	Sports Development 101 North Wacker Drive Chicago, IL 60606	312-977-0031
Youth Basketball of America	P.O. Box 36108 Orlando, FL 32823	407-363-0599

National Standards for Athletic Coaches*

Domains and Standards

Domain: Injuries: Prevention, Care and Management	
Standard 1.	Prevent injuries by recognizing and insisting on safe playing conditions.
Standard 2.	Ensure that protective equipment is in good condition, fits properly and is worn as prescribed by the manufacturer; ensure that equipment and facilities meet required standards [American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (USCPSC)].
Standard 3.	Recognize that proper conditioning and good health are vital to the prevention of athletic injuries.
Standard 4.	Prevent exposure to the risk of injuries by considering the effects of environmental conditions on the circulatory and respiratory systems when planning and scheduling practices and contests and implementing programs for physical conditioning.
Standard 5.	Be able to plan, coordinate and implement procedures for appropriate emergency care.
Standard 6.	Demonstrate skill in the prevention, recognition and evaluation of injuries and the ability to assist athletes with the recovery/rehabilitation from injuries that are generally associated with participation in athletics in accordance with guidelines provided by qualified medical personnel.
Standard 7.	Facilitate a unified medical program of prevention, care and management of injuries by coordinating the roles and actions of the coach and a National Athletic Trainers Association certified athletic trainer with those of the physician.
Standard 8.	Provide coaching assistants, athletes and parents/guardians with education about injury prevention, injury reporting and sources of medical care.
Domain: Risk management	
Standard 9.	Understand the scope of legal responsibilities that comes with assuming a coaching position, *i.e.*, proper supervision, planning and instruction, matching participants, safety, first aid and risk management.
Standard 10.	Properly inform coaching assistants, parents/guardians and athletes of the inherent risks associated with sport so that decisions about participation can be made with informed consent.
Standard 11.	Know and convey the need and availability of appropriate medical insurance.
Standard 12.	Participate in continuing education regarding rules changes, improvements in equipment, philosophical changes, improved techniques and other information in order to enhance the safety and success of the athlete.

* Source: National Association for Sport and Physical Education. (1995). National standards for athletic coaches. Reston, VA: NASPE.

Domain: Growth, Development and Learning	
Standard 13.	Recognize the developmental physical changes that occur as athletes move from youth through adulthood and know how these changes influence the sequential learning and performance of motor skills in a specific sport.
Standard 14.	Understand the social and emotional development of the athletes being coached, know how to recognize problems related to this development and know where to refer them for appropriate assistance when necessary.
Standard 15.	Analyze human performance in terms of developmental information and individual body structure.
Standard 16.	Provide instruction to develop sport-specific motor skills. Refer athletes to appropriate counsel as needed.
Standard 17.	Provide learning experiences appropriate to the growth and development of the age group coached.
Domain: Training, Conditioning and Nutrition	
Standard 18.	Demonstrate a basic knowledge of physiological systems and their responses to training and conditioning.
Standard 19.	Design programs of training and conditioning that properly incorporate the mechanics of movement and sound physiological principles taking into account each individual's ability and medical history, avoiding contraindicated exercises and activities and guarding against the possibility of over-training; be able to modify programs as needed.
Standard 20.	Demonstrate knowledge of proper nutrition and educate athletes about the effects of nutrition upon health and physical performance.
Standard 21.	Demonstrate knowledge of the use and abuse of drugs and promote sound chemical health.
Domain: Social/Psychological Aspects of Coaching	
Standard 22.	Subscribe to a philosophy that acknowledges the role of athletics in developing the complete person.
Standard 23.	Identify and interpret to co-coaches, athletes, concerned others and the general public the values that are to be developed from participation in sports programs.
Standard 24.	Identify and apply ethical conduct in sport by maintaining emotional control and demonstrating respect for athletes, officials and other coaches.
Standard 25.	Demonstrate effective motivational skills and provide positive, appropriate feedback.
Standard 26.	Conduct practices and competitions to enhance the physical, social and emotional growth of athletes.
Standard 27.	Be sufficiently familiar with the basic principles of goal setting to motivate athletes toward immediate and long range goals.

Standard 28.	Treat each athlete as an individual while recognizing the dynamic relationship of personality and socio-cultural variable such as gender, race and socio-economic differences.
Standard 29.	Identify desirable behaviors (i.e., self-discipline, support of teammates, following direction, etc.) and structure experiences to develop such behaviors in each athlete.
Domain: Skills, Tactics and Strategies	
Standard 30.	Identify and apply specific competitive tactics and strategies appropriate for the age and skill levels involved.
Standard 31.	Organize and implement materials for scouting, planning practices and analysis of games.
Standard 32.	Understand and enforce the rules and regulations of appropriate bodies that govern sport and education.
Standard 33.	Organize, conduct and evaluate practice sessions with regard to established program goals that are appropriate for different stages of the season.
Domain: Teaching and Administration	
Standard 34.	Know the key elements of sport principles and technical skills as well as the various teaching methods that can be used to introduce and refine them.
Standard 35.	Demonstrate objective and effective procedures for the evaluation and selection of personnel involved in the athletic program and for periodic program reviews.
Domain: Professional Preparation and Development	
Standard 36.	Demonstrate organizational and administrative efficiency in implementing sports programs, *e.g.*, event management, budgetary procedures, facility maintenance and participation in public relation activities.
Standard 37.	Acquire sufficient practical field experience and supervision in the essential coaching areas to ensure an adequate level of coaching competence for the level of athlete coaches. This would include a variety of knowledge, skills and experiences.

Pronouncements of Professional Organizations Regarding Youth Sports, Physical Activity, Fitness and Health.

Organization	Year	Title	Purpose/Focus
American Academy of Pediatrics	1989	Organized Athletics for Pre-Adolescent Children	Lists the safeguards that should accompany children's sports.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1988	Infant Exercise Programs	Recommends that structured programs of exercise for infants not be promoted.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1988	Recommendations for Participation in Competitive Sports	Lists medical conditions that would disqualify children from athletic competition.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1987	Physical Fitness and the Schools	Urges pediatricians to persuade school boards to maintain or increase physical education programs with an emphasis on lifetime physical activities.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1984	Children, Adolescents and Television	Lists seven reason why viewing television can be detrimental to children. Advises pediatricians about their roles in television viewing by children.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1983	Weight Training and Weight Lifting: Information for the Pediatrician	A conservative assessment of the benefits and risks of weight lifting and weight training.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1982	Climatic Heat Stress and the Exercising Child	Documents the special problems of children when exercising in hot-humid environments.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1982	Risks of Long-Distance Running for Children	Provides guidelines for involving children in long-distance running.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1981	Competitive Sports for Children of Elementary School Age	An update of their position statement in 1968.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1981	Injuries to Young Athletes	Presents the special problems of young athletes in competitive sports.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1973	Athletic Activities for Children with Skeletal Abnormalities	Outlines the conditions under which children with specific conditions can and should not be involved in athletics.
American Academy of Pediatrics	1968	Competitive Athletics for Children of Elementary School Age	Documents the conditions under which athletic competition is safe for children.

Organization	Year	Title	Purpose/Focus
American Association of School Administrators	1991	Healthy Kids for the Year 2000: An Action Plan for the Schools	Provides a 12 step action plan for developing a comprehensive school health program.
American College of Sports Medicine	1996	Exercise and Fluid Replacement	Reviews the effects of dehydration and hydration on human performance.
American College of Sports Medicine and American College of Cardiology	1994	Recommendations for Determining Eligibility for Competition in Athletes with Cardiovascular Abnormalities	Provides an extensive set of papers that review the various abnormalities and makes recommendations to physicians.
American College of Sports Medicine	1993	The Prevention of Sports Injuries of Children and Adolescents	Suggests that fifty percent of current injuries could be prevented with proper techniques.
American College of Sports Medicine	1988	Physical Fitness in Children and Youth	Lists eight recommendations for the adoption of lifelong physical activity, with an emphasis on school physical education programs.
American College of Sports Medicine	1984	The Use of Anabolic-Androgenic Steroids in Sports	Documents the adverse effects of anabolic steroids on the human body.
American College of Sports Medicine	1982	The Use of Alcohol in Sports	Reviews the literature on the influence of alcohol on human performance.
American College of Sports Medicine	1979	The Participation of the Female Athlete in Long-Distance Running	Documents that female athletes should not be denied opportunities for long-distance running.
American College of Sports Medicine	1976	Weight Loss in Wrestlers	Warns of the dangers to personal health when excessive weight loss is incurred.
American Heart Association	1992	Statement on Exercise (Fletcher et al)	Reviews the benefits of physical activity and defines the roles of medical professionals, parents, schools, employers, community groups and the insurance industry in the implementation of sound programs and practices.
American Heart Association	1986	Coronary Risk Factor Modification in Children: Exercise	Reviews ways to combat the sedentary lifestyles of children.

Organization	Year	Title	Purpose/Focus
American Medical Association	1990	America's Adolescents: How Healthy Are They?	Provides data on problems of health that affect adolescents. Recommends the promotion of healthy behavior through strengthening families, schools, communities and the home environment. Advocates placing the health of adolescents on the agenda for all segments of society.
American Medical Association	1994	Cardiovascular Health and Disease in Children: Current Status	Outlines the heart health needs of the next generation of young people and describes barriers to progress in this area.
American Medical Association	1975	Female Athletes	An early and outdated version of athletic competition for girls and women.
Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development	1989	Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century	Targets adolescents who are at risk for failure to achieve their potential. Advocates fostering the health and fitness of youth as one means of attaining academic success.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	1993	Improving Adolescent Health: Research to Guide Action (McGinnis & Kolbe)	Thirteen articles from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) that advocate a comprehensive system of health promotion for youth, linked to appropriate health services.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine	1995	Physical Activity and Public Health (Pate et al)	Outlines major issues relating physical activity to health. Recommends actions for health professionals, special populations, communities, educators, individuals and families.
Council of Chief School Officers	1991	Beyond the Health Room	Advocates that school health should be discussed in the context of school reform. Underscores the role that health has in school achievement.
Council on Physical Education for Children, National Association for Sport and Physical Education	1992	Developmentally Appropriate Physical Education for Children	Provides rationale for physical education that is based on developmental age and lists appropriate and inappropriate practices for teachers of physical education.

Organization	Year	Title	Purpose/Focus
International Consensus Conference on Physical Activity Guidelines for Adolescents	1994	A Consensus on Physical Activity Guidelines for Adolescents (Sallis & Patrick)	Development of age-specific guidelines for adolescents with suggestions for implementing the guidelines in primary care settings.
International Federation of Sports Medicine	1991	Excessive Physical Training in Children and Adolescents	Provides guidelines and examples of activities that are to be avoided in children's training for athletic competition.
International Federation of Sports Medicine	1990	Physical Exercise: An Important Factor in Health	Documents the benefits of systematic physical activity.
International Scientific Consensus Conference	1995	Physical Activity, Health and Well-Being	An extensive list of statements concerning the effects of exercise on human well-being.
International Society of Sport Psychology	1992	Physical Activity and Psychological Benefits	Records the short- and long-term benefits of exercise on mental health.
Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports	1995	The Importance of Physical Activity for Children and Youth (Pivarnik)	Provides the scientific basis for physical activity in childhood and adolescence ; advocates policies for families, communities, public health and schools.
National Association for Sport and Physical Education	1994	The Role of Physical Fitness	Defines the role that fitness has in the life of a physically educated individual.
National Education Goals Panel	1991	Building a Nation of Learners: The National Education Goals Report	Summarizes the progress to date in reaching the National Education Goals at the federal and state levels.
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute	1992	Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health: Special Emphasis on Women and Youth (Lenfant)	Review and recommendations of 10 working groups addressing the relationship of physical activity to cardiovascular health in adults, youth and women.
National School Boards Association	1991	School Health: Helping Children Learn	Discusses the 10-step process of implementing a comprehensive school health program.
National Strength and Conditioning Association	1985	Prepubescent Strength Training	Documents the benefits and risks of strength training for prepubescent children. Provides guidelines for parents and coaches.

Organization	Year	Title	Purpose/Focus
Second International Consensus Symposium on Physical Activity, Fitness and Health	1994	Physical Activity, Fitness and Health: International Proceedings and Consensus Statement (Bouchard et al)	Expansion of the Consensus Statement of 1988 and present evidence from the biological, social and behavioral sciences regarding the interactions between physical activity and health.
Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity	1994	Goals 2000: Educate America Act	Advocates access for all children and youth to school-based health and physical education for the promotion of health and fitness.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service	1990	Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives	Presents 300 measurable objectives, including eight that have direct implications for school-based physical education programs.
World Health Organization/International Society and Federation of Cardiology	1991	Physical Inactivity as a Risk Factor for Coronary Heart Disease: A WHO and International Society and Federation of Cardiology Position Statement	Designed to alert the international community that physical inactivity is an important risk factor for heart disease.